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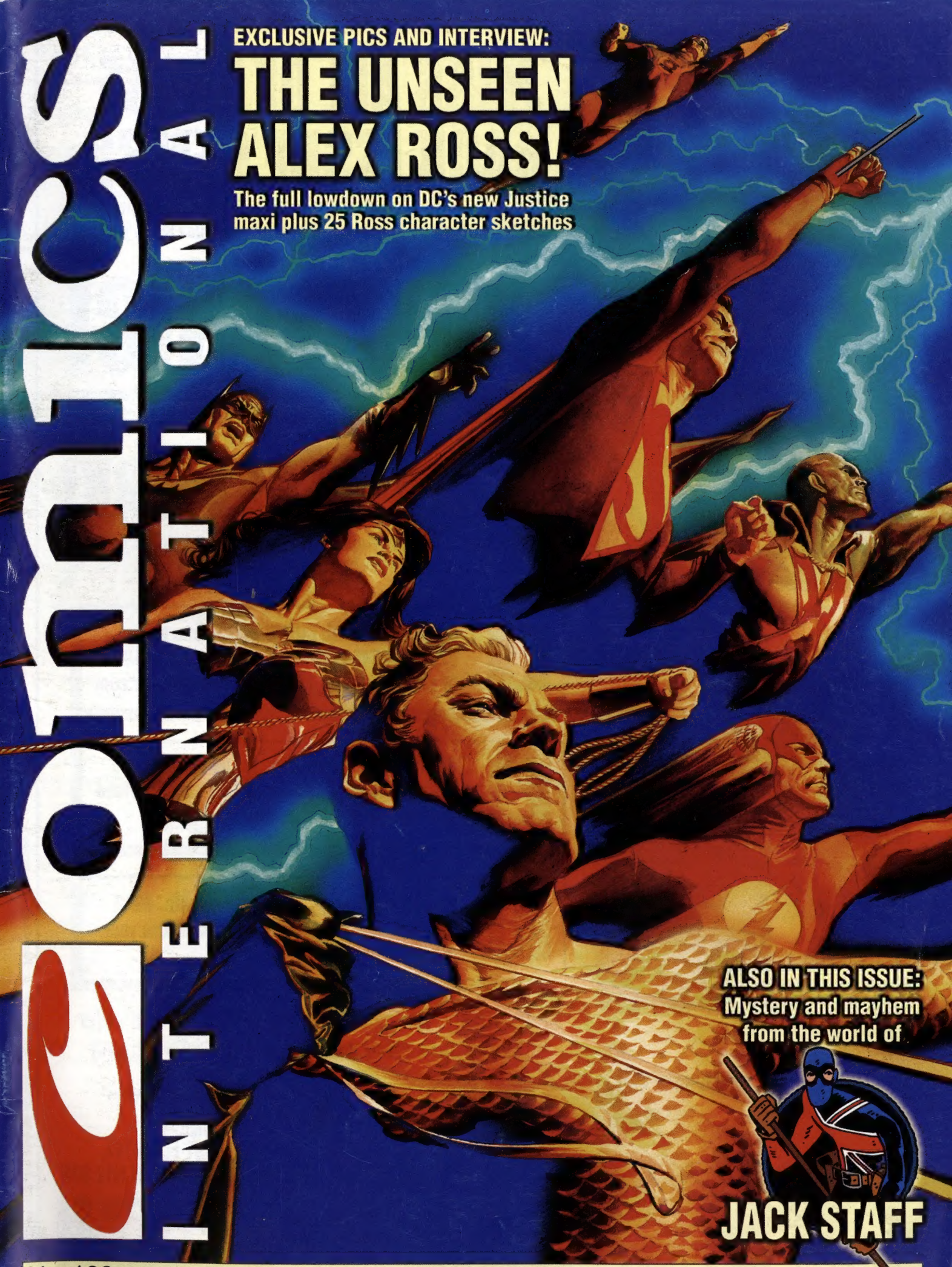

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#186 JULY 2005

Inside this issue

COVER: A big enough event that we've broken our own rules and added eight pages to this issue just to be able to fit it all in. Alex Ross and his team supreme from Marvel's Universe X jump ship to DC to create a brand new 12-issue series starring the JLA and the biggest gathering ever of their super-foes. For the full story, see page 26.

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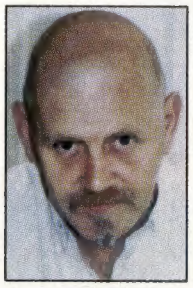
Sez Dez



Editorial
Dez Skinn

WE often talk about Marvel and DC being mainstream comics publishers and the like of Fantagraphics and Top Shelf as indies. But without doing the sums, I'd guess over 90% of Marvel and DC's output is wish-fulfillment superhero fantasy material, while I can't think of one spandex-genre title from Fantagraphics or Top Shelf. No, their material is more... well, more mainstream.

Is there any wonder comicbooks have become marginalised with such bizarro thinking. Let's go for the ever-useful dictionary definition to underline this point: As an adjective, like in *mainstream comicbooks*, it would mean "the prevailing trend of comicbooks". OK, sad but true, superheroes are that. As a noun, like in *comicbooks for the mainstream*, it seriously falls down. Hardly anybody has found a way to get comics to reach any mainstream. Main stream? Let's be honest, we're not a distributory or even a tributary. Heck, we're not even a creek or a brook. We're a puddle on a hot day. Comics aren't flowing anywhere, they're small, stagnating and in risk of evaporating.

There are upsides, graphic novels and manga are the biggest publishing growth areas in decades. But I talked about them a few months ago. It's the core business that's endangered. Two months back, I quoted Dick Hartman, VP of World Color saying – at a time when his company printed almost all US comics – that he didn't encourage any printer to get into comics. I also took a 1983 quote of Walt Simonson's, "Comics are too cheap". Well, comics didn't stay cheap and Hartman had watched print runs plummet, knew that the format and printing processes were antiquated and saw that comicbooks were dying.

Desperately, publishers looked elsewhere, and found a short-term fix. Canada could print them on better paper at a higher cost (litho instead of letterpress) and the outspoken fan network could replace the doomed newsstand market. Where the casual corner store outlets sold around one in five copies (and only had to pay against sales), the fan market would pay for every copy ordered, whatever the cover price.

But fans get bored, gain expensive priorities (aka parenthood) and disappear, from both the medium and mortality! So Walt, you got your wish, comics are no longer cheap. But, in aiming at a 30+ audience with expensive product, their easy entry point has disappeared, along with swaps and second hand shops. The entire medium has become a niche market.

Hence, despite Marvel holding 60% of the top 100 selling comicbooks, publishing sales now represent less than 17% of its overall revenue.

The solution for product reverting to a mainstream growth area once more? Let's go back to corner shop sales. So what if at 20% sell-through it doesn't make a short term direct profit? It's only run-on paper, a cheap cost for such large companies that will not only boost profile, but long term will sustain the direct market with fresh blood and allow this inexpensive multi-media R&D thinktank and marketing machine (or comicbooks as we still call them) to survive into the next decade.

Otherwise, for how long will one-off gimmicks and single arc guest artists keep titles viable?

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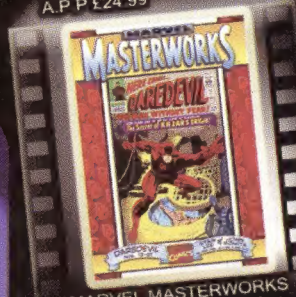

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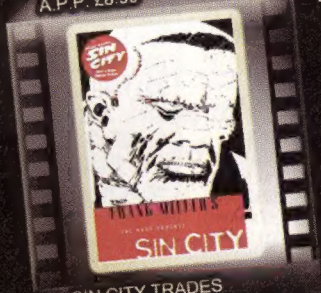

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Dispute over movie leads acclaimed writer to quit DC

Above: Kev O'Neill promo art for the third volume of ***The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen****. Although intended for DC, this latest instalment in the saga the artist and writer Alan Moore launched in 1999 is now to appear as a joint publication from Top Shelf Productions and the UK's Knockabout Comics.*

Fallout from V for Vendetta *promo leads Alan Moore into acrimonious final break from corporate comics publishers*

HAILED by many as the finest writer the medium has ever seen, Alan Moore's award-winning career is littered with fractured relationships that remain unresolved to this day.

Among others, over the years he has fallen out with **Warrior** publisher Quality Communications over procedure; with Marvel over its decision to reprint his Captain Britain strips without permission and with DC over its accounting for **Watchmen** merchandise, a dispute exacerbated when the company decided to implement a ratings system without reference to the writer. In each case the end result has been Moore's lasting refusal to work for the 'offending' party on any level.

WildStorm firewall

Even his current America's Best Comics imprint – published by Image courtesy of Jim Lee's WildStorm until DC acquired the artist's San Diego-based studio – only continues with DC because all parties agreed there would be no contact between Moore and the New York-based publisher. All necessary dealings are done through WildStorm, which effectively serves as a firewall.

But that safeguard has now proved insufficient to prevent the writer walking away from DC and ABC because of comments made by producer Joel Silver in a *V for Vendetta* movie press release.

Moore, like Stephen King, has always distanced himself from movies of his work. Like the best-selling horror author, the intransigent writer says his stories are on the shelf, not on the screen.

Lying in the Gutters

"I didn't want anything to do with films and had no time this year, being in the middle of work, my day job, writing, I wasn't interested in Hollywood," That, Moore told the ***Lying in the Gutters*** website, which broke the news, is how he responded to *V* producer Larry Wachowski. *The Matrix* director – who has written the adaptation with his brother Andy – had invited Moore to become involved with the production.

He was, therefore, alarmed to see Silver claiming that Moore "was very excited about what Larry had to say and Larry sent the script, so we hope to see him sometime before we're in the UK. We'd just like him to know what we're doing and to be involved in what we're trying to do together"

Appalled at what he describes as blatant lies, Moore gave DC two weeks to get a retraction, a clarification and a modest apology. When the company's best efforts failed, the writer quit.

Thankfully for DC, Moore was already nearing the end of his current ABC contract *[see below]* so his departure leaves no gaping holes in its schedule. A much bigger blow is the loss of the writer's possible future output

Moore left in the ABC pipeline

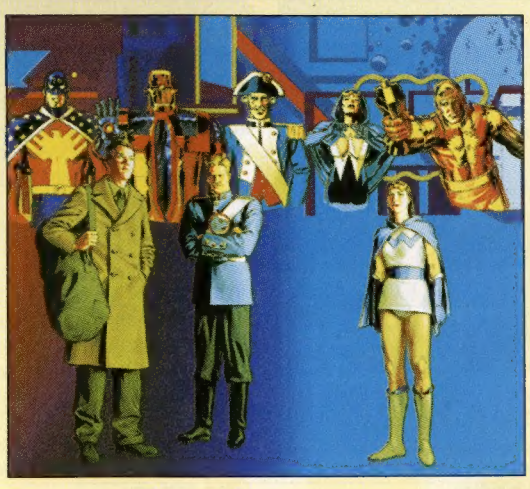
IF ALAN Moore was planning to leave DC with the least amount of upheaval possible, he could not have better timed his departure *[see main story]*.

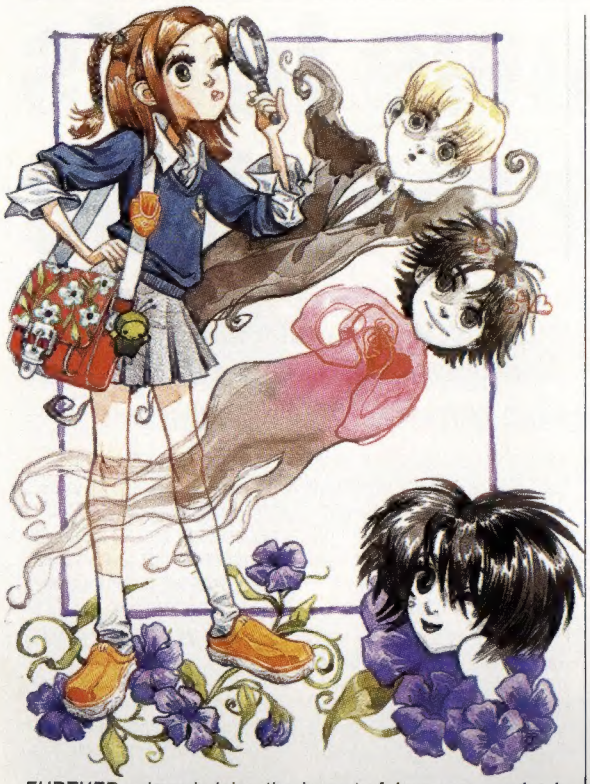
With the end of his current DC/WildStorm/America's Best Comics contract looming, the writer had already wound up **Promethea**, **Top 10** and his **Tom Strong Terrific Tales** anthology. He is also down to the last few issues of **Tom Strong**, which ends with #36, The $2.99 comic is currently up to #32, which shipped in April.

Also outstanding is Moore's long-awaited **Top 10** prequel, **The '49ers**. Drawn by the series artist, Gene Ha *[see dustjack art, right]*, the 112-page hardcover graphic novel is priced $24.99. It has recently been rescheduled from May 25 to July 13.

Moore's sole remaining project for ABC is **The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen: Dark Dossier**, which is described as a graphic novel that sits in between volumes II and III of the series drawn by Kevin O'Neill. However, sources at DC suggest the hardcover, which is scheduled for an autumn release, is more likely to be a handbook/guide to the comic. **The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen** volume III was to have been released through ABC. It will now appear sometime in 2007 as a Top Shelf/Knockabout co-publication.

● SF author Paul DiFilippo and **The Power of Shazam!** artist Jerry Ordway are working on the five-issue **Beyond the Farthest Precinct**, a **Top 10** sequel that premieres on August 17.





*FURTHER acknowledging the impact of Japanese comics in mainstream bookstores, Vertigo has commissioned Jill Thompson to produce a second shojo [girls] manga. A follow up to her **Death: At Death's Door**, the black and white **Dead Boy Detectives Digest** features Charles Rowland and Edwin Paine, the deceased British sleuths introduced in **The Sandman: Season of Mists**. Guest-starring Death, the 5x7¼" 144-pager ships on July 7, priced $9.99.*

DC resurrects Silvestri's long-defunct Top Cow team

ONCE all the rage, inter-company crossovers are now an all-but extinct gimmick, an unsustainable by-product of the 1990s boom.

But they do still occur as DC is to prove with the 48-page **JLA/Cyberforce**. The New York-based publisher's half of a reciprocal arrangement with Top Cow, which gave the Image imprint last year's **The Darkness/Superman** two-parter, it is written by **Action Comics**' Joe Kelly and illustrated by **Justice League Elite**'s Doug Mahnke and Norm (**Wolverine**) Rapmund.

This crossover differs from all its predecessors in one unique respect – one half of the team-up has not been seen in almost eight years. Created by Marc Silvestri, Cyberforce is the super-group upon which the Image co-founder and former **Uncanny X-Men** artist built his Top Cow empire. Introduced in 1992, the title was cancelled in 1997.

*Above: Marc Silvestri's art for the wraparound cover to **JLA/Cyberforce**. The 48-page DC oneshot ships on July 7, priced $5.99.*

Silvestri has long harboured plans to bring the team back but – while he wrote and drew a *Cyberforce* story for the seriously overdue **Image 10th Anniversary** hardcover, it has ultimately been left to DC to pluck his team from comicbook limbo.

Alias unveils Devil's Keeper

SEAN J Jordan is putting a spin on the Phantom-like story of a family that has served as heroes down the generations.

With Alias's **Devil's Keeper**, the writer is utilising a concept created by **The Imaginaries**' Mike S Miller. It tells of martial artists who have passed the secret of the mystical power of Shang Ti Do – The Way of the Heavenly Emperor – down from father to son as each generation battled the demon Chi Tao down the ages.

*Above: Asher, the protagonist of **Devil's Keeper**, as depicted by Mike S Miller for the alternate cover to Alias's **Girls of Alias** promotion.*

But, rather than follow the adventures of the latest holder of the power, it looks at what happens when the next in line is killed leaving no one to take his place.

"In the present day, Lee Chang, the last living master of Shang Ti Do, loses his son in a fight against Chi Tao," Jordan, who adapted Robert Silverberg's **The Seventh Shrine** for Devil's Due, explained, "Chang takes on three students and attempts to select one of them to become the next heir to his art but Chi Tao wants to destroy their order once and for all and manipulates the students towards his own evil purposes..."

The series, which premieres in July with a promotionally-priced 75c issue, is drawn by Carlos Paul, a relative newcomer, and Brazil's Lynx Studios.

"**Devil's Keeper** is a martial arts story, so expect a lot of action," proclaimed Jordan. "The first story arc – which will be 10 to 12 issues – will get to the heart of the clash between the monks of Shang Ti Do and Chi Tao. Things will reach a boiling point, and one of the students will betray the others and unleash the secret powers of the art in a really unfortunate way."

Kirby influence looms large in Gødland

THE MYTH of Opus-8 creator Tom Scioli is in no doubt why he is collaborating with **Wildcats Version 3.0** writer Joe Casey on a new ongoing Image series.

He told **CI** he was committed to **Gødland** – pronounced God-land(!) – as soon as the writer told him he was looking to do a way-out cosmic Jack Kirby-style comic. "This is my thing. I like visual sci-fi adventure fantasies. They work beautifully in comics. You get to have all these cool creatures, exotic worlds and neat-looking machinery."

I SEE HOW THEY LOOK AT ME.
THE DISTRUST... THE HATRED... THEY STILL DON'T KNOW WHAT TO MAKE OF ME.
CAN'T SAY I BLAME THEM...
GHAAAA...!
WHAAA...!
WHAT THE HELL IS THIS STRANGE SKIN TONE FREAK...?!

*Above: A Tom Scioli-drawn interior page from the first issue of **Gødland**, a $2.99 series launching from Image in July.*

First contact

Scioli, whose self-published title is often held up as an example of an obvious Kirby influence, said the series focuses on humanity's advance scout, Adam Archer. "He's the first man on Mars and the first man to make contact with the greater community of the cosmos. It's through him that the great powers of the universe make contact with mankind."

Asked how much research he had done for the series, the artist's retort was a blunt, "None". He added, "It's from-the-gut primal fantasy. If you can't fake it, you shouldn't draw superhero comics."

As for why he's inking his own pencils on the project, he explained, "When you're doing the Kirby style, the wrong inks can totally ruin the look. I've seen it happen. The finish is really important. I know what it's going to look like with my own inks. If I had the opportunity to work with one of Kirby's collaborators, like Mike Royer or somebody, that would be a different story."

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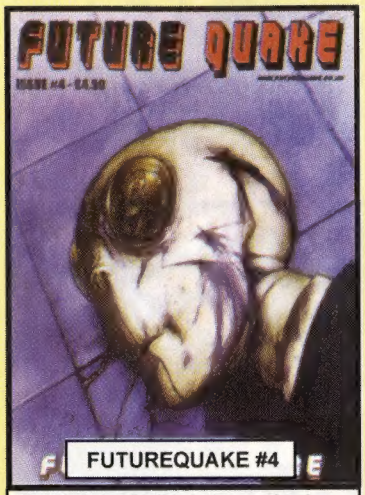

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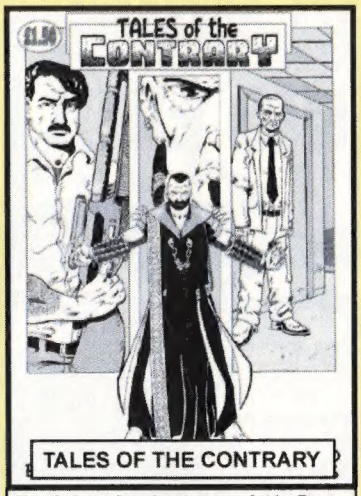

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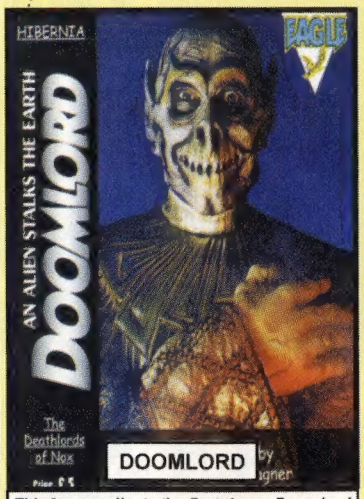

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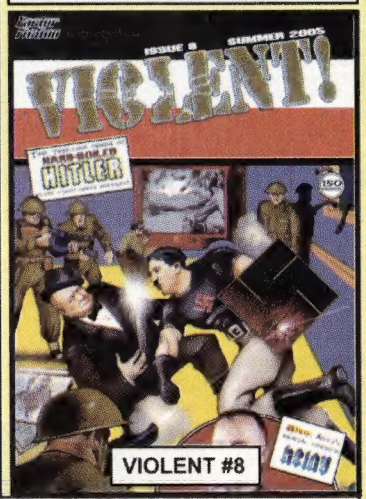

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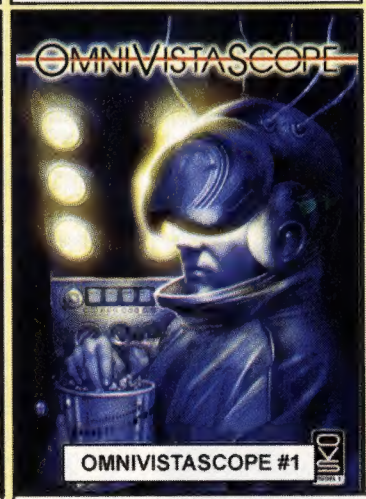

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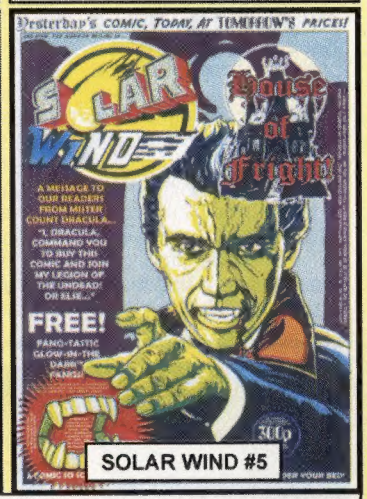

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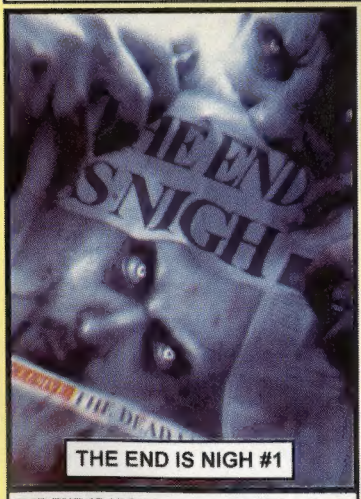

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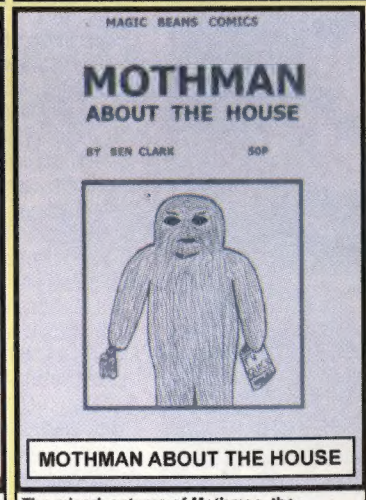

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Snake Eyes exposed

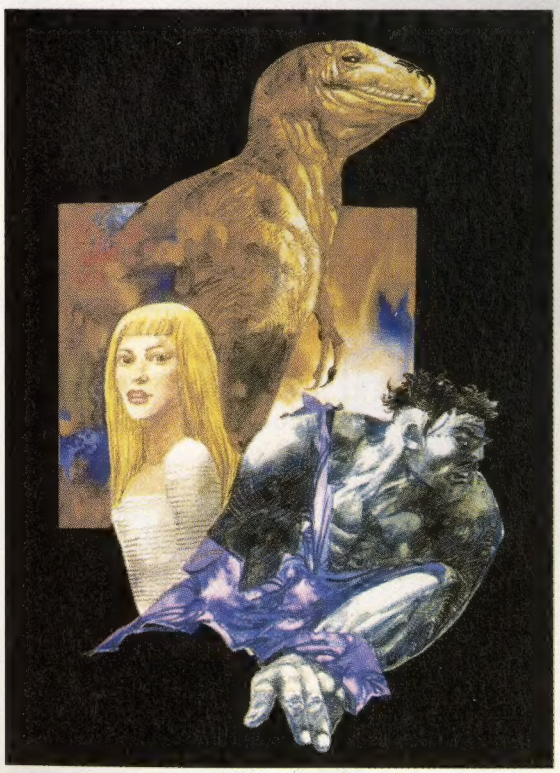
*Above: Emiliano Santalucia and Jeremy Roberts cover art for the first issue of **G.I. Joe: Snake Eyes – Declassified**, a $2.95 Devil's Due four-parter debuting in August.*

ALTHOUGH Marvel revealed the history of G.I. Joe's resident mute and masked ninja 21 years ago – in 1984's **G.I. Joe** #26 – Brandon Jerwa is convinced there is more to the origin of Snake Eyes than has been told.

In fact, he is adamant that his six-issue **G.I. Joe: Snake-Eyes – Declassified** will reveal the full story for the first time. The mini, which actually started out as a proposal to give the Joe his own **Wolverine**-style solo title, is drawn by **Masters of the Universe**'s Emiliano Santalucia and colourist Jeremy Roberts

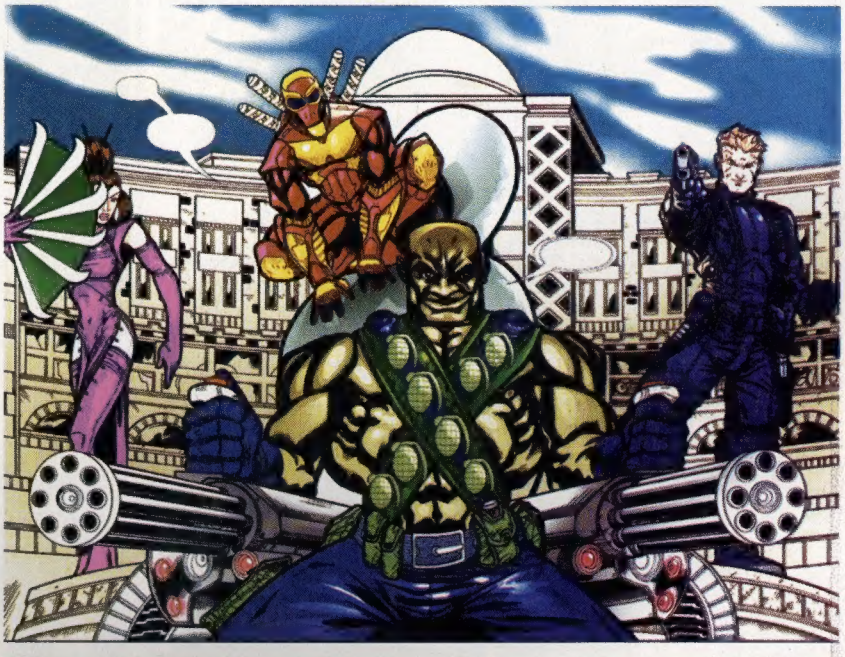
While **Declassified** is to reference earlier revelations of Snake Eyes' background, Jerwa is not planning to rigidly adhere to such details. "I think it's important to revisit the origins of the Joe-verse when we can, because they need some cleaning up in the timeline department. The Marvel book tied everything to the Vietnam War but it's time to let that go, without destroying the stories. We need to start working to make Joe timeless and the story that gives birth to so many key pieces of the mythology is the most natural place to start."

As for his take on the hero, the writer commented, "I think Snake Eyes has a pretty complex emotional structure that gets lost behind the creative conceit of his mask and the personal conceit of a 'mysterious past'. This is a man who's seen some of the ugliest things the world has to offer and the mask belies his impartial perspective on that ugliness – he's not here to pass judgment. He's a soldier, pure and simple. My goal with this book is to show what turned him into that soldier."



*GREG Pak has the unenviable task of writing the sequel to **1602**, Neil Gaiman's reality-altering Marvel six-parter. The writer, whose credits include **Warlock** and **X-Men: Phoenix – Endsong**, is joined on the six-issue **Marvel 1602: New World** by **Thor: Son of Asgard** artist Greg Tocchini. Set 400 years ago, the $3.50 series, which picks up where Gaiman's Andy Kubert-drawn 2003 mini left off, follows David Bruce Banner and Peter Parquagh as they become the Hulk and Spider-Man in a world where dinosaurs still roam. Shown above is Sergio Toppi's cover art for the first issue, which ships on August 3.*

Egypt unleashes Middle East Heroes



WHILE the US and UK comics industries are struggling to come to terms with an ever-decreasing market, an Egyptian publisher has launched a series to phenomenal success.

As AK Comics' Newhaven-based UK agent, Andrew Stephenson told **CI** that **Middle Eastern Heroes** is currently selling 50,000 copies a month with sales increasing by 8% an issue. On such figures, which many of its Western competitors can only dream of, the title would place at #31 in Diamond's latest [April] sales chart.

Great Satan

Despite the fact that much of the Middle East views the US as the Great Satan, AK is devoting its title to a very American genre. Set after the end of the devastating 55 Year War, the comic features four superheroes, each of whom stars in the series on a four-monthly rotating basis. They are:

- Aya, Princess of Darkness – an Algerian who is something of a female Batman
- Jalila, Saviour of the City of All Faiths – think a Levantine female Captain Atom
- Rakan, Lone Warrior – the Conan-esque sabre-toting Mesopotamian warrior wanders Medieval Arabia and Persia
- Zein, the Last Pharaoh – a Cairo-based immortal

AK Comics, which publishes in Arabic and English, sells in Egypt. It is starting distribution in Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf states with plans to move on to Lebanon, Syria and North Africa in the next 12-18 months.

Under a banner which reads "If you think American superheroes are tough – you really need to get out more!" AK's stated mission is "to fill the cultural gap created over the years by providing essentially Arab role models, in our case, Arab superheroes to become a source of pride to our young generations."

"What makes this different is the change in perspective and the cultural backdrop calling on imagery from as far back as Ancient Babylon to the modern day," Stephenson stated.

*Above: A story page from **Aya: The Princess of Darkness** #2; art by Chad Smith. Top: A double-page spread from **Rakan: The Lone Warrior** #1; art by Rafael Albuquerque and Rafael Kras.*

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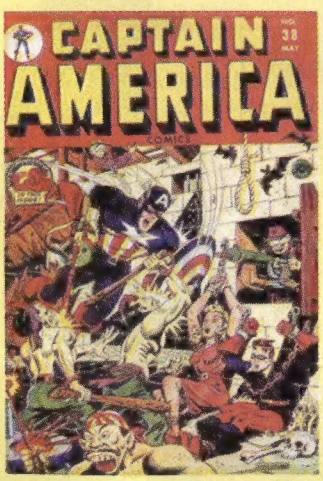

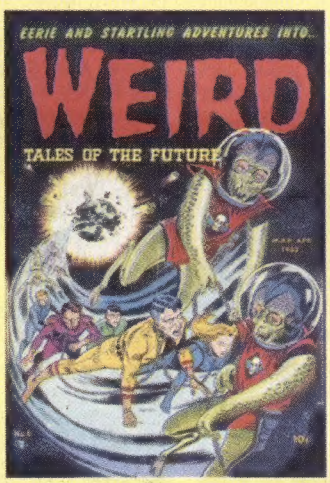

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"The Saint in Night of the Demon"

1960s Brit-movie "director" turns hero to tackle Satanists in latest Image graphic novel from writer of ***The Black Forest*** *and* ***The Wicked West***

DOCTOR Who artist Adrian Salmon is making his American comics debut with a 64-page Image graphic novel.

He is collaborating with writer Robert Tinnell on **The Faceless**, which he told **CI**, takes place in 1962. It stars Terry Sharp, a two-fisted, hard-living director of classic horror films, who has got an eye for the ladies, too... lots of them. "By day the cameras roll – by night, Terry rolls, taking the fight to a shadowy Satanic organisation [The Faceless of the title] hellbent on taking control of the British Government and wiping Terry out in the process... something he doesn't quite agree with and he makes sure they know it with interest."

Pictured: Adrian Salmon art – An unused cover [above] *to* ***The Faceless: A Terry Sharp Story*** *and a story page* [right] *from the same 64-page Image graphic novel, which ships in August, priced $6.95..*

House of Hammer

The British artist said that he and Tinnell met through a couple of on-line horror forums they both frequented. "Bob pitched the idea of doing a 1960s action hero/horror book to me – a kind of riff off **The Saint** and *Night of the Demon* – with a good dose of classic Hammer horror on the side . I agreed instantly , because I'm a huge Hammer horror fan and you can blame Dez's **House of Hammer** for that."

For his part, Tinnell, whose previous credits include **The Black Forest** and **The Wild West**, told **CI**, "I quite love horror in general and, of course, comics. But with Terry Sharp my motivations are myriad. Yes, it's a horror book. But I could easily see Terry getting sidetracked into a murder mystery or thwarting a spy plot – although the Satanic conspiracy is one that will ultimately dominate his entire life ; and yes, it is that thoroughly plotted out."

Terence Fisher

"What's more, I suppose, if I'm being honest, it's a chance to play in a milieu I love," he added. "Terry's job is directing films that could easily have been done at Hammer by Tererence Fisher. So we get to play with stories and visuals that are very near and dear to our hearts."

Asked for the main theme of **The Faceless**, which is subtitled **A Terry Sharp Story**, the writer responded, "I suppose, in the first book, Terry gives voice to one of the dominant themes: "If in the course of battling evil, you yourself are required to perform evil – what separates you from those whom you are fighting?"

Above: Marcelo Frusin's cover art for ***Loveless****. The ongoing monthly reunites the artist with* ***100 Bullets*** *writer Brian Azzarello, with whom he worked on* ***Hellblazer****. Although described as a Western by Vertigo's Karen Berger, Azzarello claims the series – set to debut this autumn – "may walk like a duck and talk like a duck but it ain't a duck."*

US Annuals make comeback

MARVEL is reviving a format it abandoned four years ago.

Although it had been publishing annuals almost continuously since 1963, it dropped the once-a-year specials in 2001 in favour of increasing the number of issues of its most popular titles from 12 a year to 13. It is now resurrecting the one-offs but, so far, only for its **Ultimate** line.

Planned for release a week apart during August are four 48-pagers. Each is written by the core title's writer and retails at $3.99.

First up on August 10 is **The Ultimates Annual** #1 on which Mark Millar is joined by penciller Steve (**Preacher**) Dillon. It introduces S.H.I.E.L.D. director Nick Fury's other super-team.

It is followed a week later by **Ultimate Spider-Man Annual** #1, which debuts Peter Parker's new girlfriend. Written by Brian Michael Bendis, it is drawn by **Marvel Age: Spider-Man**'s Mark Brooks.

Shipping on August 24 is **Ultimate X-Men Annual** #1. This features Rogue and Gambit and the return of the Juggernaut in a Brian K Vaughan story pencilled by **Thor**'s Tom Raney.

Finally the Ultimate Inhumans make their debut in **Ultimate Fantastic Four Annual** #1 by Millar and penciller Jae Lee.

Above from left to right: Cover art for ***Ultimate X-Men Annual*** *#1 (by Stuart Immonen),* ***Ultimate Fantastic Four Annual*** *#1 (Greg Land) and* ***Ultimate Spider-Man Annual*** *#1 (Mark Bagley). Top: Bryan Hitch's cover art for* ***The Ultimates Annual*** *#1. All four $3.99 48-pagers ship in August.*

No superheroes in Ellis's DCU title

IN AN unusual move, DC has sanctioned a series free from superheroes even though it is set in the DC Superhero Universe.

Comics with spandex-clad beings with incredible powers constantly pummelling each other account for over 80% of the US market but their absence from what is after all the first superhero macrocosm is puzzling. However, writer Warren Ellis says his **Jack Cross** "just happens to be coming out of a DCU [editorial] office."

The creator-owned comic – which Ellis insists is not a mature readers title – is drawn by Gary (**The Filth**) Erskine, the Glasgow-based artist who previously worked with the **Transmetropolitan** writer on Image's **City of Silence** [2000].

Creepily left-wing

"I wanted to write an action-thriller series that wasn't, like most airport novels in the genre, creepily right-wing," stated Ellis, whose credits also include **Ministry of Space** and **Planetary**. "It is, instead, creepily left-wing. Because, you know, lefties can shoot and torture people too.

"Set in America, and about Americans, **Jack Cross** plays with the notion that 'liberals' are cuddly recycling owl-fanciers. The first three stories – they're all four-issue arcs – play with three of the usual thriller genres: the spy/counter-terrorism story, the police procedural and the bodyguard story," the writer explained. "And the guy who calls himself Jack Cross, a self-mutilating emotional cripple whose mother once tried to assassinate Ronald Reagan, is in the middle of all of them – working for The Man to guarantee his anonymity, using government blood money to finance political activism."

For his part Erskine told **CI**, "The script was great and very immediate. Warren is definitely an artist's writer. He sees things so visually. I immediately latched onto the whole genre too, seeing elements of *24*, *CSI* and various other cool thrillers in the storyline.

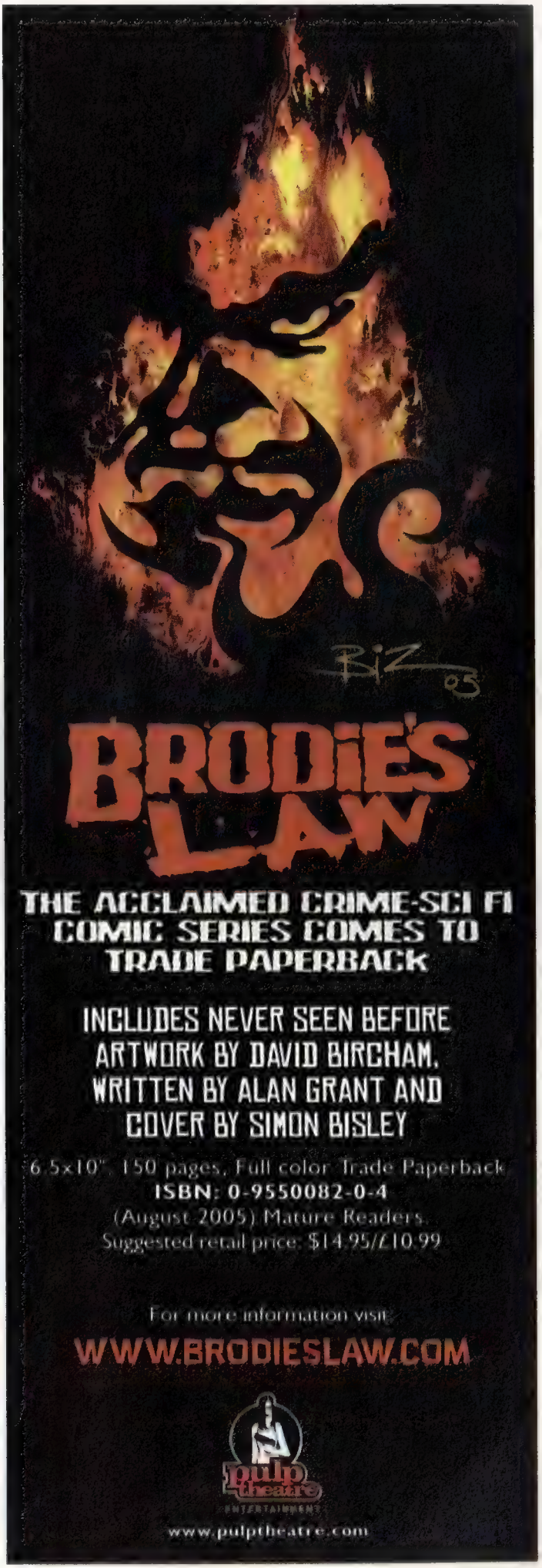
"Jack Cross is a very complicated characer," he continued. "The initial interpretation of a 'hired gun outside the law' distracts the reader from the fact that our hero is a lot more complicated than that. He's a tortured soul with a helluva lot of internal baggage. There's an edge to this story that most readers wouldn't expect. As an artist it was also great to work with such a character. A real challenge."

X-ray effects

Ellis is providing full scripts and Erskine confesses to being happy to work that way as he has had little plotting experience. "It still allows a certain amount of change and interpretation but Warren gets it right so often it's best just to follow what is there. Portions of the script are sparse in detail, allowing me to interpret myself but Warren keeps the specifics where necessary. Guns, helicopters and SUVs are left for me to choose according to the script and certain story requirements... but x-ray effects and internal viewpoints are rigid story elements and I don't deviate from those. Warren – with this script – finds a good balance for the artist to work on the book. Any confusing details or sequences can be clarified with a quick e-mail."

Referring to the comics' DCU setting and its absence of superheroes, Erskine commented, "That will hopefully give the book its own standalone identity and make it a very special read. There are enough superhero books out there that this particular story should be distinct enough for readers to enjoy."

***Jack Cross** #1, priced $2.50, ships on August 24.*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DARK Horse's ***Conan and the Daughters of Midora*** *writer Jimmy Palmiotti is teaming up with his* ***Hawkman*** *writing partner Justin Gray for a one-shot featuring another sword-wielding Hyborian. Illustrated by Liam (****Incredible Hulk****) Sharp, Dynamite Entertainment's 40-page* ***Red Sonja: One More Day*** *[cover art, above] ships in August, priced $4.99.*

Marvel's First Family back in UK

Feature by Kieron Mullens

THE FANTASTIC Four return to the UK in June, ahead of their movie debut, as Panini launches its version of "The World's Greatest Comic Magazine".

Fantastic Four Adventures is to feature a mix of current and classic strips in the popular 76-page *Panini Collectors' Edition* format. However, the first issue will be a 100-page special that reprints #51-52 of the present US series plus the origin of Doctor Doom from 1964's **Annual** #2 and, inevitably, the very first issue of **Fantastic Four** from 1961.

Pacheco and co

Introducing the new title, editor Scott Gray said, "The opening story [written by Carlos Pacheco, Rafael Marin and Karl Kesel and drawn by Mark Bagley, Kesel and Al Vey] involves the Inhumans, Doctor Doom, Invisible Woman's imminent pregnancy and a new race of mysterious superbeings. It's blindingly good and a great introduction to the FF."

Asked to explain the appeal of the FF, Gray is quick to respond. "I don't think you can narrow it down to just one element. The **FF** comics have so many strengths. They can depict family drama... science fiction storylines... cosmic superhero adventure... high comedy... you name it. Even the sky's not the limit with the FF. And the four leads are classic characters who, unlike most comics icons, still feel like living, breathing people."

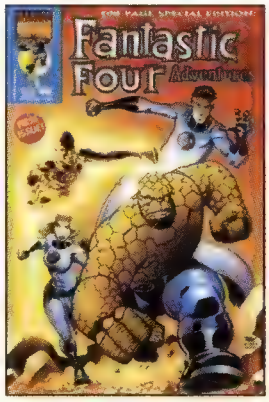
Looking ahead, Gray added, "We're confident that the FF will get plenty of support from British fans with the new film [premiering in the UK on July 22] giving the characters a boost in public awareness and an overall greater appreciation of the classic Marvel characters these days."

Lee and Kirby

The groundbreaking work of Stan Lee and Jack Kirby is to be an integral part of the new UK title, with a Lee/Kirby strip reprinted every month. The inaugural issue is to include a seven-page feature that, Gray explains, "focuses on the team's early days, looking at Lee and Kirby's original ideas for the comic and how it evolved over the years they worked on it."

"These are the stories that launched not just the FF but Marvel Comics itself. 'Classic' is just too small a word to describe them," enthuses Gray. "We want the younger readers to discover Doctor Doom, the Skrulls, the Sub-Mariner and everyone else just as their counterparts in the 1960s did."

- The team had its own UK title in 1979-83 with the 53-issue **Complete Fantastic Four** and a 29-issue 1982-83 series.



Above: The cover to the 100-page first issue of Panini UK's ***Fantastic Four Adventures****; art by Mike Wieringo and Karl Kesel from Marvel's* ***Fantastic Four*** *#509 [2004].*

Fantastic Four Adventures *#1, priced £2.40, goes on sale June 30.*

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Marvel's non-team gets JL treatment

Pictured: Interior pages from the first $2.99 issue of Marvel's ***Defenders*** *five-parter; art pencilled by Kevin Maguire.*

BEST-known for their irreverent approach to DC's Justice League – most recently in 2003's six-issue **Formerly Known As The Justice League** and its current sequel, *I Can't Believe It's Not The Justice League* [**JLA Classified** #4-9], Keith Giffen, J M DeMatteis and penciller Kevin Maguire are moving across to Marvel to inflict their unique brand of humour on the Defenders.

As **CI** discovered when speaking to Giffen and DeMatteis about their new Marvel five-parter, their approach to the project is just as tongue-in-cheek as their writing style. Asked if Marvel had been as easy to work as DC in terms of allowing liberties with their heroes, Giffen responded, "Always assuming DC was easy to work with. Just kidding, Dan."

Not Popeye's Bluto

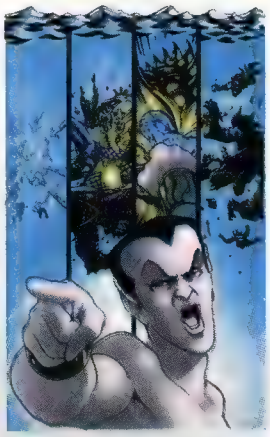
"I think Marvel's a little nervous about us," was DeMatteis's contribution. "DC's used to us – maybe that's why we're not working there any more. Marvel still isn't sure if we're having fun with the characters or making fun of the characters. Really, guys, it's okay. We love these characters."

As for how they see Doctor Strange, Hulk, Namor and the Silver Surfer – who due to their casual attitude towards their teammates are often collectively referred to as a non-team – Giffen said, "The Hulk is, pretty much, the Hulk, although Banner's been fun. I'd originally seen the Hulk as a Bluto – *Animal House*, not *Popeye* – type but, when it came down to it, it didn't fit. Doctor Strange? Bob Newhart. Definitely. Namor? Kind of a Niles Crane [*Frasier*] with attitude. That said, I'm ultimately at the mercy of whatever dialogue JMD drops into the characters' mouths. And drops and drops and drops..."

Hulk gets laid

That remark provoked DeMatteis to respond, "You're equating my dialogue with... droppings?" prompting Giffen's "That wasn't what I meant... but, now that you mention it..."

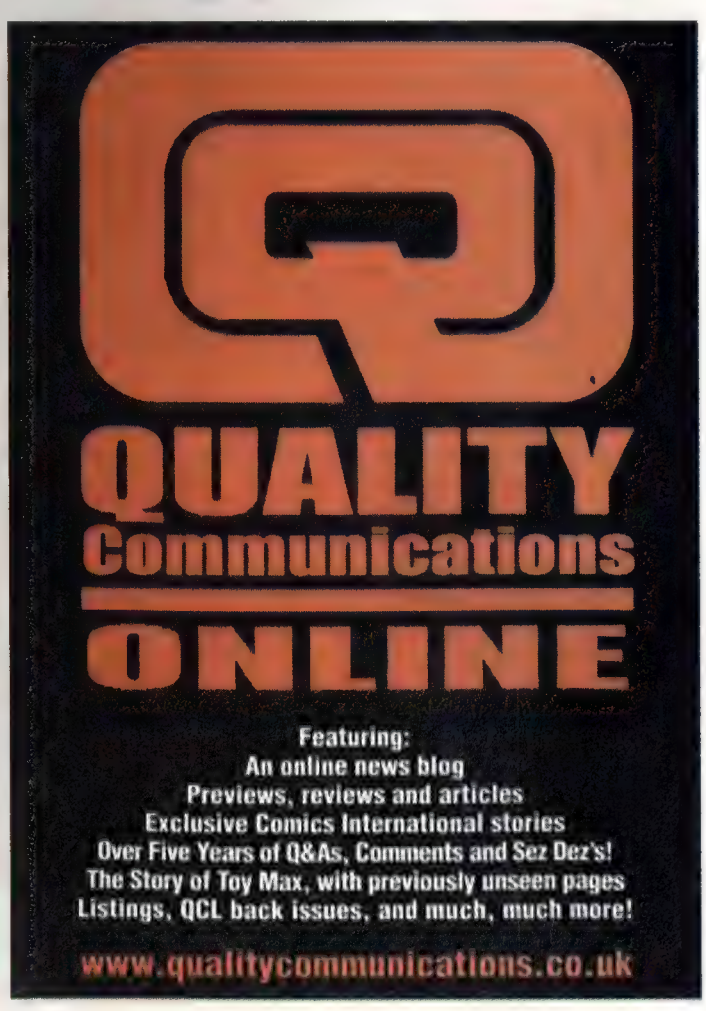
Giffen said they were allowed to go further than they had any right to expect with **Defenders**. "If I didn't know any better, I'd think no one up there was reading it." To which DeMatteis added, "Well, our editor is. Maybe. But I think everyone else is closing their eyes really, really tight and hoping that, when they open them, we won't be there."



The pair continued their wacky repartee when asked what they considered to be the most outrageous plot element they had got away with. "Does getting the Hulk laid count," asked Giffen, the instigator of much of the banter.

"It was really very tastefully done. Kind of like a Merchant-Ivory film," noted DeMatteis, to which Giffen commented, "Yeah, I wept when I read it."

DeMatteis, who claimed he had just fallen asleep, then said, "When I work with Keith, I turn my brain off. I'm not aiming for anything intelligent or literary, psychologically deep or spiritually profound."



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*WILDSTORM'S favourite ex-SAS soldier turned assassin is coming back to take another crack at the Authority. For Kevin Hawkins' third outing writer Garth (**Preacher**) Ennis is teaming up with Judge Dredd co-creator/artist Carlos Ezquerra, with whom he previously worked on **Bloody Mary** and **Adventures of the Rifle Brigade**. Launching in September, their **Authority: The Magnificent Kevin** four-parter is to feature cover art by Glenn Fabry [above], the original interior artist on 2002's **The Authority: Kev** one-shot and its sequel, 2004's four-issue **The Authority: More Kev**.*

Superpowered gang heads for Image

THE SERIES writer Fred Van Lente describes as *"The Sopranos* with superpowers" is being relaunched as a bimonthly Image title.

First published by Moonstone, **The Silencers** is drawn by Steve Ellis, who illustrated 2002's **Crimson Dynamo** title from Epic as well as the Moonstone 2003 four-parter. It is the story of the feared superpowered enforcers for New York City's all-powerful Provenzano crime family, who went on to become freelance criminals.

Black Kiss

Headed by the Cardinal, they mainly targeted the new Mafia power known as The Syndicate, who had killed many of the team's members while trying to take over the Manhattan crime scene with a highly addictive designer drug marketed as Black Kiss, which has extraterrestrial origins.

Moonstone is releasing a 128-page trade paperback – subtitled **Black Kiss** – that collects the original story. Priced $14.95, this ships in July to coincide with the launch of the $2.95 Image title.

Asked if there was any connection between the two series, Van Lente – who is introducing the new Scorpion in a three-parter starting on July 6 in Marvel's $2.99 **Amazing Fantasy** #10 – said the Image series picks up one year after the original mini. "In the wake of the Black Kiss War, there is a vacuum of mob power in the city of New York. Every two-bit super-hood is flooding the five boroughs, looking to pick up some quick-and-easy street cred by knocking off the guys who knocked off the Syndicate – and that would be the Silencers themselves.

Act of violence

"Our antiheroes have been trying to lay low since their big score against the Syndicate but, as the new series opens, a mobster enacts a particularly despicable act of violence against a Silencer family member," he continued. "Cardinal realises that there's only way for them to be safe – they have to take over the New York mobs themselves.

Van Lente said **The Silencers** came about because he and Ellis wanted to do something different with superheroes for once. "I love the genre but as I get older the 'hero' part of it wears on you. Institutionalised heroism is something all human beings should be profoundly suspicious of. To me it's much more interesting to seek out the good in bad people than to see good people being good over and over again."

*Above: Stiletto and the Cardinal are featured in Steve Ellis's cover art for the first $2.99 Image issue of **The Silencers**.*

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North Country tale

*Above: A Stuart White interior page from the 8x9" **North Country**, his 96-page NBM/Comics Lit graphic novel, which ships in July, priced $13.95.*

A NEWCOMER is chronicling the painful but true story of his infancy in a graphic novel from NBM's Comics Lit imprint.

Describing the theme of his 8x9" **North Country** to **CI**, Shane White said, "It's about the scars that you get from what life throws at you and how we are creatures of perseverance."

He explained how he was inspired to create his 96-page tale after becoming tired of carrying the memories and relating stories to people from his childhood as bleak commonplace instances. By way of example, he offered, "There was this one time my sister and I ended up eating our pet rabbits for lunch, because Dad didn't think we took care of them enough. I mean, that gets old after a while. With so much fluff 'reality entertainment' I wanted to put something out there warts and all.

"Overall the book has a very serious tone and some may say a depressing quality," he added. "The journey, like anything, is harrowing but the reward I think is that it's not entirely hopeless. It has many surreal moments, some arguably unbelievable, but if it's in there it's as true as I've perceived it."

***CLA$$WAR** writer Rob Williams is bringing **2000AD** nine episodes of* Breathing Space *this August. The story is set on LUNA-1 – Earth's moon colony – where the men who import oxygen are among the elite of the province. But when a serial killer begins brutally murdering them, Judge Marshal King is charged with finding and stopping the 'Earth Murderer'. Only trouble is, the cop has problems of his own. The serial, which is described as one part crime thriller, one part old school western starring the new sheriff in a frontier town, starts in Prog 1451. It is illustrated by Laurence (**The Disciples**) Campbell and* Judge Dredd*'s Pete Doherty* [see art, above].

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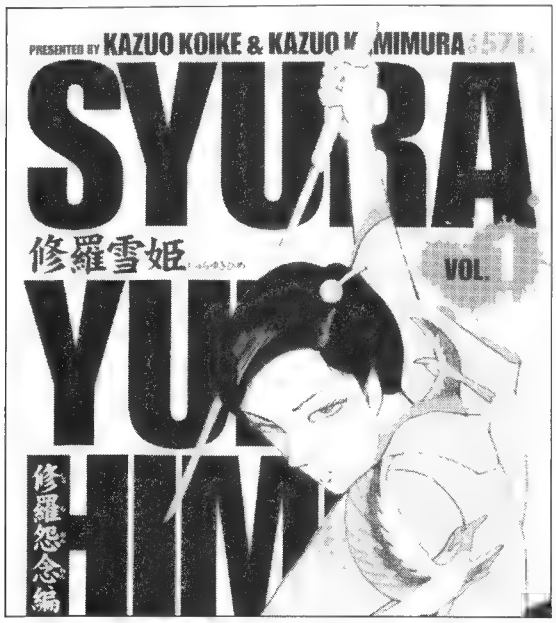


Kill Bill manga title at Dark Horse

Publisher adds to mature line, leading off with manga series that inspired Quentin Tarantino

DARK Horse began offering manga to the American market in 1988 but, despite its pioneering status, the Oregon-based publisher has struggled to maintain a share of the now-booming market in the face of overwhelming competition from an ever-growing number of rivals anxious to jump on the bandwagon.

While it continues to do well with translations of such classic Japanese comics as **Lone Wolf and Cub** and **Astro Boy**, it seems to have lost its identity in the tidal wave of new titles hitting shelves in mainstream bookstores with increasing frequency.

Quentin Tarantino

In what may be an attempt to address the problem, the company is to launch four currently unscheduled manga comics that will sit better with the regular, more adult orientated titles in the general Dark Horse line.

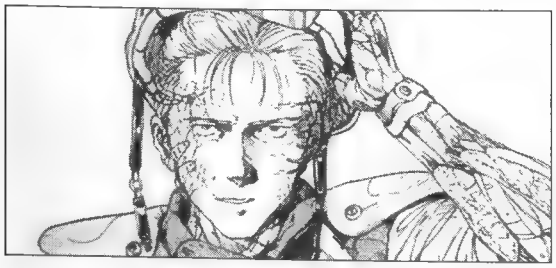
Of these, the most interesting is **Lady Snowblood** *[Japanese cover above]*. Written by **Lone Wolf and Cub**'s Kazuo Koike, the story of a girl raised to avenge the brutal murder of her family reportedly provided the inspiration for O-Ren Ishii as portrayed by Lucy Liu in Quentin Tarantino's *Kill Bill*.

Also in the pipeline is Hiroki Endo's **Eden** *[art below]*. An SF saga set in a disease-ravaged future where a secret organisation has taken over the world, the series has its basis in Gnostic mythos.

The other two titles are the full colour **Space Pinchy** – a pulpy science fiction parody that received a nomination for the best Japanese science fiction manga award in 2002 – and **Saiyuki Dendaio**. This is another version of the Chinese classic, **Xi You Ji [Journey to West]**, which has spawned numerous manga and anime adaptations including Akira Toriyama's **Dragonball** and **Saiyuki** by Kazuya Minekura.

Dark Horse has also obtained the rights to **Crying Freeman**. Written by Koike and illustrated by Ryoichi Ikegami, the six-volume yakuza epic was previously published by Viz in the US.

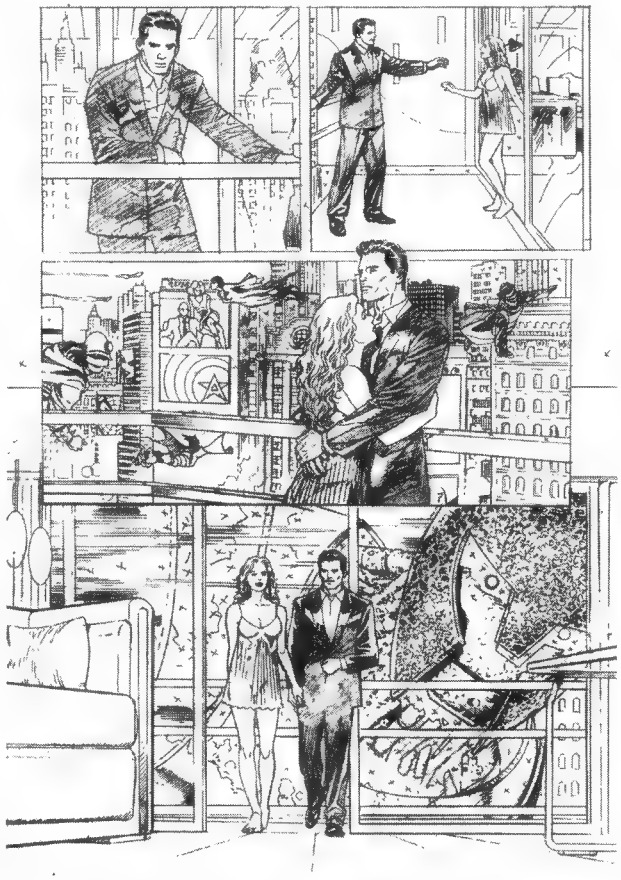
● Dark Horse began releasing manga in the US in 1988 with **Outlanders** but it was preceded by Eclipse/Viz, which started co-publishing English versions of Japanese comics the year before.



M for Utopia

A FIVE-issue spin-off from Marvel's reality-altering **House of M** is to be an epilogue to **District X**, which ends on June 8 with #14.

Kicking off on July 13, the $2.99 **Mutopia X** is by the **District X** team of writer David Hine and penciller Lan Medina. It is, the London-based Hine told **CI**, a story that takes the residents of the mutant ghetto out of the gutters and in to the limos. "The losers of District X make good, but does wealth, popularity and great sex make for happiness? Probably, but with characters like Shaky Kaufman, Ismael Ortega and the artist currently known as Jazz-E-Jazz, you can guarantee that they are going to blow it."



Failure and tragedy

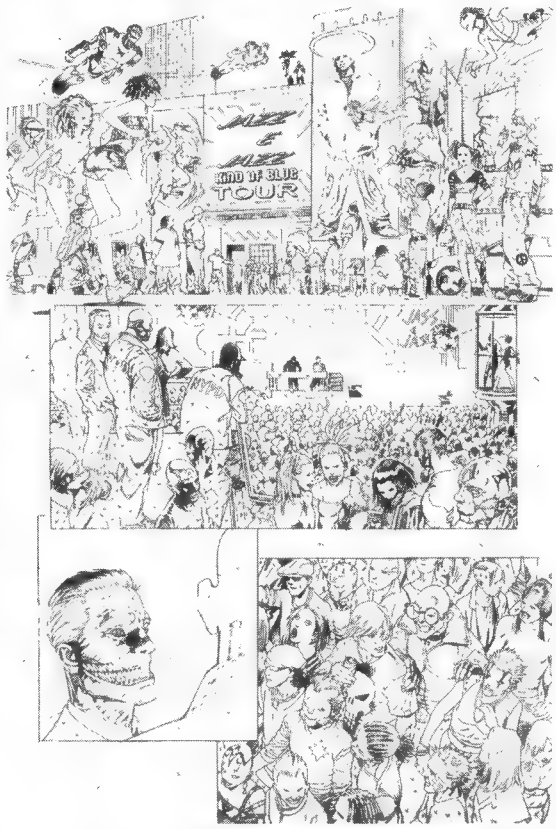
The mini follows on directly from **District X**, continuing the characters and themes developed in the series and exploring them from a new perspective. "The series works as a standalone story, while it also wraps up the psychological journey of Ismael Ortega, as he continues his slide into personal failure and tragedy," the writer explained.

When the **House of M** was being developed, an invitation went out to Marvel writers with a regular series to pitch ideas for crossovers. Hine's editor, Mike Marts, came up with the title and the writer quickly pinned down the basic plot.

Mutopia X is, in theory, the inverse of **District X**, reflecting the new improved status of the mutant characters. It is also the name of the Centre for Transformation and Illumination set up by the new age guru and mystic Absolon Mercator. Its main theme, says Hine, is you are what you are. "No matter what advantages a person may have, their true nature will always shine through.

"I always set out to create intelligent, entertaining and well-crafted stories," the writer added. "This particular series takes Ismael to the limits. He started out as a very sympathetic but flawed character. The flaws have gradually opened up into deep personality disorders that endanger both his own well being and everyone around him. It's a dark path he's treading and **Mutopia X** takes him all the way to the heart of his personal darkness.

"Ironically," Hine continued, "the mood is often lighter than in previous arcs of **District X**. I've put a lot more humour into the first couple of issues... although I accept that my sense of humour may be a little warped."



*Pictured: Pencilled story pages from the first issue of **Mutopia X** #1; a $2.99 Marvel five-parter launching on July 13; art by Lan Medina.*

Sex and violence

Hine considers his artistic collaborator to be one of the most skilled storytellers working in American comics today. "Lan is great at both the quiet moments and the action sequences.

"**Mutopia X** will give him the chance to do more action spectaculars than I've given him up until now. He draws some of the sexiest women in comics too so I've given him a few opportunities to show off that particular skill too," stated Hine, who concluded, "Sex, violence, humour, tragedy. Who needs spandex?"

Storm's Cairo past explored

IT LOOKS like Marc Sumerak is rapidly becoming the writer Marvel turns to when it wants stories of younger heroes.

With **Machine Teen** and **Power Pack** among his most recent credits, Sumerak is about to add a four-parter focusing on the childhood of a founding member of the new X-Men. It is a series that, the writer told **CI**, is a look at the unique beginnings of one of the X-Men's most recognisable members, as young Ororo Munroe – the girl who will one day become Storm – struggles to survive on Cairo's mean streets.

Oliver Twist

Ororo: Before the Storm is drawn by **Superman**'s Carlos Barberi and Juan Vlasco, who worked with him on **Impulse**.

The writer said the high concept Hollywood pitch would be **X-Men** meets *Young Indiana Jones* via **Oliver Twist**. He also explained that, while the initial inspiration to explore Ororo's childhood came from a conversation with editor Nicole Wiley, "I'd always been a fan of Ororo and her history and I thought that her time as a thief in Cairo naturally opened itself up to all sorts of interesting story opportunities that had yet to be explored."

Modesty Blaise

Unlike most of her mutant teammates, little is known of Ororo before she joined the X-Men. In the 30 years since she made her debut in **Giant-Size X-Men** #1 [1975], only sketchy details have been revealed. These tend to be only the tidbits disclosed by Chris Claremont, who pretty much pillaged her origin wholesale from Peter O'Donnell's newspaper strip heroine, Modesty Blaise.

Although both Sumerak and Barberi stressed they ignored the Blaise connection, the writer did admit that it is the foundation of the future Storm's past that makes her story unique. "Of all the X-Men, she has one of the most interesting origins – but it has remained virtually unexplored over the years. We know all of the crucial pieces of her story but the actual adventures that took place during that part of her young life are mostly unknown."

While Sumerak stressed that the mini was in-continuity, he did admit that it was not standard Marvel Universe fare. "It's an action and adventure book with very few superhero elements at all. Yet it still features an important character in the Marvel mythos at an extremely interesting point in her life.

"And while Ororo might not be ready to harness the power of the storm quite yet, there will most definitely be plenty of all-out action," he concluded.

Above: Carlo Barberi's sketches of Ororo, drawn in preparation for Marvel's $2.99 ***Ororo: Before the Storm****, which launches on July 6.*

Another manga publisher debuts

THE CONTINUING phenomenal demand for manga in mainstream US bookstores has led to a flood of new companies – both independent and offshoots of mass market publishers – being set up to capitalise on the boom.

The latest newcomer is Go! Comi. It has been established by TV producer/writer David Wise, who is looking to the multimedia possibilities of Japanese comics. "In Japan, manga is the backbone of the entertainment industry, serving as inspiration for television, films and a huge array of merchandise. In the rush to put out more and more titles, American publishers are overlooking the potential that each title offers. We see a field of opportunity that we're in a unique position to cultivate."

No stranger to transferring comics to other media, Wise's extensive TV credits include *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* – on which he wrote or story-edited more than 100 episodes – as well as *Batman: The Animated Series*, *Cadillacs and Dinosaurs* and *Jim Lee's WildC.A.T.S.*

Hot bishonen

He has brought in ex-TokyoPop senior editor Jake Forbes to oversee the line, which launches in October with four black and white series, which are running currently running in Japan in Akita Shoten's **Princess**. In the right-to-left manga digest format and priced $9.99 each, they are:

- **Her Majesty's Dog** *[art left]* is Mick Takeuchi's story of a girl with a spirit dog and a hot bishonen [beautiful boy] panting at her heels. It is described as an occult action romance title.
- **Cantarella** by You Higuri is the story of Cesare Borgia, the infamous 15th century Italian.
- In **Crossroad**, Mizuki Shioko puts a 15-year-old girl in a home with two stepbrothers, a kid sister and no parents.
- **Tenshi Ja Nai!! [I'm No Angel!!]** by Takako Shigematsu tells of a girl who ends up with a super-popular TV idol as her boarding school roommate.

HAVING already written the English-language versions of ***Battle Royale*** *and* ***Battle Vixens*** *for TokyoPop, Keith Giffen is working on new material for the Los Angeles-based manga publisher. He is collaborating with artist Ben Roman on* ***I Luv Halloween****, a series about a group of disturbing trick-or-treaters created by Roman. The 192-page first volume ships on October 11, priced $9.99.*

CI #184 competition winners

IN **CI** #184, five lucky readers had the chance to win copies of Titan Books' **The Art of Batman Begins** hardcover together with **Batman: Cover to Cover** and **Batman Begins: The Movie**. The winners were:

K M Fleming, Togham, Farnham, Surrey
Jamie Jack, Broomridge, Stirling, Scotland
Pete Morley, Faversham, Kent
Andy Turner, Carshalton Beeches, Surrey
Miss C L Whitfield, Caversham Park Village, Reading

Reader votes scored the 10 most popular sections of the issue as:

1 News International (20.7%)
2 Batman feature (14.1%)
3 Reviews (9.9%)
4 News Roundup (7.1%)
5 Q&A (6.1%)
6 Letters/Comic Cuts (5.2%)
7 Advance Listings (5.1%)
8 Frame to Frame (4.9%)
9 Sez Dez (4.2%)
10 Comment (3.0%)

The highest scoring section as the least popular feature was *"None, they're all fine"* – remarkable at 32.0%, with Comics Economics second at 14.6% and Novel Graphics third at 11.7%. No to statistics and Enki Bilal, eh?

In Brief

DC HAS yet to decide on the format for Matt Wagner's **Batman: Dark Moon Rising**.

However, it is unlikely that the 12-parter, which is still being developed by the **Grendel** creator, will appear in **Detective Comics**, where David Lapham's year-long *City of Crime* serial concludes in November's #812.

IT MAY have been announced as a $3.50 five-parter but Marvel fans have now been waiting over a year to see more than the first issue of **Daredevil: Father**, which shipped in April 2004.

Issue #2 has finally been rescheduled for August 31 with the remaining three issues confirmed as following monthly. All four issues have also been reduced in price to $2.99, which is the same as the new **Director's Cut** of the first issue, which hits stores on August 3, including such bonus features as printing the script for the issue alongside uninked pencil pages.

Daredevil: Father is written and drawn by Marvel editor-in-chief Joe Quesada, who – with this precedent-making 15 month gap – must find it awkward to be critical of freelancers who are only a few days late delivering their work.

SHIPPING in August, **The Flash** #225 is not only the conclusion the *Rogue War* serial; it is also writer Geoff Johns' last issue of the DC title.

Replacing him on #226 is Stuart Immonen with Darwyn Cooke then taking over to write a four-issue story arc.

IN A move underlining the belief that Marvel publisher Dan Buckley is not in favour of mature readers titles, a toned-down version of **Supreme Power** is to be relaunched next February as a Marvel Knights title.

The series, a harder edged reworking of the 1985 cult 12-part **Squadron Supreme**, is currently published under the MAX banner. Also to have been published under that banner were Frank Cho's **Shanna the She-Devil** mini, which was moved to Marvel Knights prior to publication, and the Daniel Way-written **Ant-Man** mini, which remains unscheduled.

ALMOST four decades after he and Jack Kirby introduced the Black Panther in **Fantastic Four** #52 [1966], Stan Lee is involved in the creation of another black superhero.

The writer's POW! Entertainment is partnering with **Vibe Magazine** to create an urban champion whose adventures are to be published as graphic novels after serialisation in the magazine. The hip hop hero is to make his debut in early 2006.

Book Report

BOB ANDELMAN spent almost three years interviewing Will Eisner, researching his life and work and interviewing his friends and family as well as many of the writers and artists who acknowledge *The Spirit* creator's influence.

The result is the black and white **Will Eisner: A Spirited Life**, a 6x9" softcover to be published by Dark Horse's M Press imprint in September. Fully illustrated, this 352-page biography also includes commentary from Alan Moore, Denis Kitchen, Joe Kubert, Stan Lee, Jules Feiffer, Neal Adams and many others.

PURE Imagination is reissuing the first two volumes of its aborted ***Complete Jack Kirby*** series on a $20 CD-Rom.

Shipping in August, the disc incorporates almost 400 pages reprinted chronologically and with accompanying analysis by Kirby historian Greg Theakston. It also includes a previously unpublished Kirby interview.

ON THE eve of the launch of **Infinite Crisis**, DC is to give the **Absolute** treatment to the crossover's ground-breaking 1985 predecessor.

Crisis on Infinite Earths: The Absolute Edition is a two-volume hardcover slipcased set shipping in November, priced $99.99.

The 368-page Volume One reprints all 12 issues of the series written by Marv Wolfman and drawn by George Pérez and inkers Dick Giordano, Jerry Ordway and Mike DeCarlo. A 96-pager, the second volume features the behind-the scenes story on the making of the maxi-series together with the first reprintings of the **Official Index to Crisis** and **Official Index to Crisis Crossovers**. Other features include a look at post-**Crisis** events and an explanation of how the Superboy/Legion of Super-Heroes conundrum was solved.

ALTHOUGH he only illustrated a handful of comics stories – mainly for Marvel in the 1960s – Jim Steranko's influence on the medium continues into the 21st century.

The legendary innovator is now set to reveal his theories and techniques in a new series of 8x11" *How to...* books from Vanguard Productions. The first volume of **Steranko Design** is the 164-page **Hypertype** in which he explains his methods for creating everything from handcrafted lettering to digital hi-tech logos.

Partially in colour, the $34.95 hardcover ships in August. A signed slipcased edition – which includes an additional 16 pages of rare and unpublished character and concept designs – is available for an extra $15.

...news round up... news round up... news round up... news round

X-Men director still up for Ultimate run

BRYAN Singer has not foresaken his plans to write **Ultimate X-Men** now that he has abandoned the third movie to feature Marvel's mutants in favour of directing *Superman Returns*.

The director, who plans to write about a year's worth of the series, is currently scheduled to follow Brian K Vaughan on the Marvel comic. His first issue is likely to be #66, which ships in December.

Fountain turned off until movie

VERTIGO has postponed **The Fountain**, the 8½x11½" graphic novel it was planning to ship on August 24.

A 176-page standalone tie-in with director/writer Darren Aronofsky's SF movie of the same name, the $29.99 hardcover's publication is now set to coincide with the as-yet unscheduled release of the New Regency/Warner Bros feature, which stars Hugh Jackman and Rachel Weisz. It is written by Aronofsky and painted by Kent Williams.

Sin City gets Library treatment

THEY have been released as comics, as trade paperbacks, as limited edition hardcovers and, most recently, as digest-sized collections.

Now with Roberto Rodriguez and Frank Miller already developing a sequel to the first *Sin City* movie, Miller's **Sin City** titles are being reissued in a deluxe oversize hardcover format reminiscent of Russ Cochran's **EC Libraries**. Each 9x12" volume reprints the hard-boiled stories as originally published – in black and white with spot colour – and includes full colour reproductions of the comicbook covers.

Dark Horse's **Sin City Library** is to be released in two four-volume slipcased sets with the first lined up for October. Retailing for $175 and running to 840 pages, the set contains **The Hard Goodbye**, **A Dame to Kill For** – the basis for the second movie *[see art, above]*, **The Big Fat Kill** and **That Yellow Bastard**.

Following in November, the second $175 set, which runs to 736 pages –includes **Family Values**; **Booze, Broads, and Bullets** – a collection of one-shots – and **Hell and Back** together with **The Art of Sin City**.

Jonah Hex rides back to DC

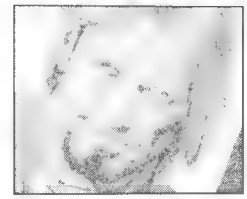
A DECADE ago DC's most popular Western hero fell under the auspices of Joe Lansdale and artist Tim Truman, who gave him the Vertigo treatment across three miniseries spread over five years.

Now, after six years without his own title, Jonah Hex is riding back to the DC Universe where **Hawkman** co-writers Justin Gray and Jimmy Palmiotti are to relaunch the scar-faced cowboy in his own ongoing series. Joining Gray and Palmiotti, whose joint credits also include **The Monolith** and WildStorm's **Twilight Experiment**, on the currently unscheduled **Jonah Hex** is **Samurai: Heaven and Earth** artist Luke Ross.

Coming of Ultimate Galactus delayed

WHATEVER controversial writer Warren Ellis's strengths, he cannot seem to escape an association with late shipping titles.

Recent examples include **Planetary**, his notoriously delayed collaboration with artist John Cassaday, his multi-artist WildStorm 12-parter, **Global Frequency** and his six Adi Granov-illustrated issues of Marvel's **Iron Man**. Currently to be added to the growing list are **Ocean**, the $2.95 WildStorm six-parter drawn by Chris Sprouse and Karl Story, which now concludes on June 22 instead of April 20 as originally scheduled, and the four-issue **Ultimate Secret**, the $2.99 middle segment of an Ellis-written Marvel trilogy that began with the Trevor Hairsine-drawn **Ultimate Nightmare** – a five-parter that concluded three months late – and ends with the introduction of Galactus into



Marvel's Ultimate Universe in the four-issue **Ultimate Extinction**.

However, no matter who is to blame for the other delays, **New Avengers** writer Brian Michael Bendis accepts responsibility for the late running of the Steve McNiven-pencilled **Ultimate Secret**, which has led to #3 being pushed back to September 21 from June 8. "I told Marvel I could do the *Sentry* arc in three issues. I had laid out my scenes and had it all worked out and had [Paul] Jenkins blessing but writing isn't an exact science. In fact, science isn't an exact science. It's writing, it's organic. And as I kept writing I thought of new ideas and new scenes and scenes I had got tossed for new scenes and before I knew it I needed an extra issue. I tried to cram it all into the three issues, but it did not work.

"I came to Marvel yalmaka in hand and told them I needed the fourth issue. I knew things were tight for Steve but I didn't know exactly what the schedule was. We toyed with a fill-in or having [David] Finch finish the story, but Steve's work is so unique that a fill-in would be glaring. So though it was ultimately Marvel's decision to keep Steve on the story, I do take the responsibility for it because I said I could do one thing for them and could not I would have never done this to any of you on purpose and I am sorry," stated the writer, who tried to add a bit of perspective, concluding, "Hey when I was a kid I had to wait a year and a half for the final issue of **Camelot 3000**. So .."

● Marvel has refused to divulge the name of the artist assigned to **Ultimate Extinction**, which is not now expected to debut before December.

● The conclusion of **Planetary**, which Ellis says ends with #26, has been further delayed by the rescheduling of issue #23 *[see art, above]*. The $2.99 comic has been pushed back to June 15 from May 25.

49ers runs late

ALAN Moore's long-awaited **Top 10** graphic novel has been delayed.

The Gene Ha-illustrated **Top 10: The 49ers** has been pushed back from May 25 to July 13. Published by America's Best Comics, the writer's DC/WildStorm imprint, the 112-page hardcover is a prequel to the original series. It is priced $24.99.

IDW unearths First's Mars

IDW is to release a 288-page trade paperback reprinting all 12 issues of one of First Comics more cutting edge titles.

Launched in 1984, **Mars** was the work of writer/artist Mark Wheatley and Marc Hempel. It is the story of a six-member team sent to terraform the red planet. Unfortunately for them, once the initial procedures are completed, the terraformers lose all communication with Earth leaving them to make a decision that will not only forever change their lives but could also affect the future of the human race.

"I was on a quest for the sense of wonder. I missed the wild

...people in the news... people in

ED BENES has extended his exclusive agreement with DC by a further three years.

The artist, whose previous credits include **Birds of Prey**, **Gen13** and **Supergirl**, joins writer Mark Verheiden as the new regular **Superman** team with issue #217, which ships on May 11. They replace Brian Azzarello and Jim Lee, whose 12-issue run on the $2.50 title finished with #215.

WOLVERINE editor Jenny Lee has left Marvel as has Talent Manager C B Cebulski.

No replacements have yet been named for either of the two, who were both hired during Bill Jemas's reign as publisher.

WONDER Woman and **Villains United** cover artist J G Jones has signed exclusively to DC for two years.

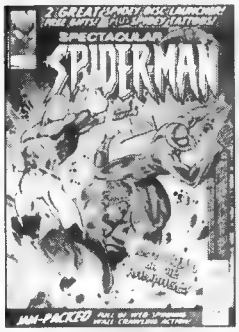
ALSO signed exclusively to DC for two years is ex-CrossGen art

up... news round up... news round up... news round up... news round

imagination that filled the old pulp science fiction stories from the 1930s and 1940s," Wheatley explained. "Mainly it was a response to the growing knowledge of our solar system – the understanding that, unlike all the predictions in the grand old pulp magazines that every planet, moon and lump of rock would have an atmosphere and be populated by a race of pink, green or purple people - that the planets were likely to be barren of life."

IDW's **Mars** collection ships in August, priced $39.99. It is also available as a signed sand numbered hardcover for $75.

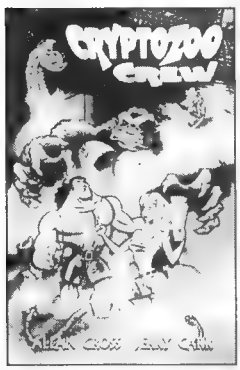
Marvel reprints UK strip



A STRIP commissioned by Panini UK for issue #114 of its **Spectacular Spider-Man** comic is the lead feature in a 48-page Marvel one-shot.

Written by Jim Alexander and drawn by John Haward and John Stokes, the 11-pager pits Spider-Man and Captain Britain against the Red Skull. The story – for which Alexander and Haward are developing a sequel, is included in the cumbersomely-titled **Marvel Milestones: Captain Britain, Psylocke and Golden Age Sub-Mariner**, alongside reprints from **Uncanny X-Men** #213 and – from 1941 – Timely's **Human Torch** #2. The $3.99 special ships on August 17.

Cryptozoologists change format again



ALLAN Gross and artist Jerry Carr, who launched their **Cryptozoo Crew** as an online strip before moving it to NBM as a bimonthly comicbook, are reformating their title as a series of biannual graphic novels.

The series chronicles the adventures of cryptozoologists Tork and Tara Darwyn, the husband and wife team who hunt such mythical creatures as the Chupacabra, Yeti, Mothman and Skunk Apes. The first of the NBM graphic novels features four new stories as well as reprinting the two issues of the comicbook.

Gross and Carr are still planning the occasional special issue done in traditional comic book format.

Due for an autumn release, the first of these is an origin issue featuring a cover by Liberty Meadows creator Frank Cho.

Back to print again for OMAC Project

DC IS going back to press for a second time with the $2.50 first issue of **The OMAC Project**.

A spin-off from **Countdown to Infinite Crisis**, the six-parter is written by Greg Rucka and drawn by Jesus Saiz. The third printing of #1, which is available now, features a variant version of Ladron's cover to the original edition with one of the OMACs pictured in the centre of the image.

DC is also planning to reprint **The OMAC Project** #2 but no details have as yet been announced.

An indication of the impact **Countdown to Infinite Crisis** has had, a third printing of the first issue of another six-issue spin-off is also available now. The new edition of **Villains United** #1 features an inked and coloured version of the second printing's cover, with art by Dale Eaglesham and Wade von Grawbadger. Written by Gail Simone, the $2.50 mini is drawn by Eaglesham and von Grawbadger.

X-Men artist to End Fantastic Four

WITH his unexpected departure from **Uncanny X-Men** imminent, Alan Davis has announced that he is to write and draw the currently unscheduled **Fantastic Four: The End**.

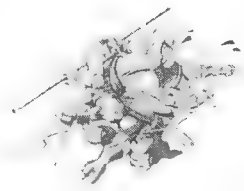
Davis, who is under exclusive contract to Marvel, leaves the mutant monthly with issue #463, which ships in August.

Waid exits City of Heroes

TROY Hickman is to replace Mark Waid as writer of Image/Top Cow's comicbook spin-off from ***City of Heroes***, the hugely popular MMORPG [Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game].

The writer, who brought his self-published **Common Grounds** to Top Cow last year, takes over the $2.99 title with #4. Pencilled by series regular David Nakayama, the issue ships in August.

DreamWave's Turtles hit UK



LONDON-based Titan Books has acquired the UK licence to the **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Animated** comic launched in 2003 by DreamWave Productions.

The first title under the new licence is the 104-page **Attack of the Mousers**. The £7.99 trade paperback, which ships on June 24, is written by Peter David and illustrated by LeSean Thomas and Eric Sander. It reprints the first four issues of the series the now-defunct Canadian publisher cancelled with #7.

A second volume, which collects the remaining three issues alongside bonus material, is being planned.

Doom Patrol writer given [Bill] Finger

ARNOLD Drake was one of the two recipients of the inaugural Bill Finger Award for Excellence in Comic Book Writing. Selected by a committee chaired by Jerry Robinson, the awards – which are administered by Jackie Estrada for Comic-Con International – are given to both a living and a dead writer who exemplify the award's criteria. The posthumous award went to Superman co-creator Jerry Siegel.

Drake, whose creations include Doom Patrol and Deadman, told **CI** he is currently working the chapter he is contributing to a currently unscheduled book on **Aging through the Ages**. "Each chapter is by a different writer. Mine is a series of cartoons about an aging couple who refuse to conform to the old-age cliches. Since they are Harry and Ruth Golden, the feature is called *The Goldens' Age*. It's single panel cartoons and I'm doing the drawing as well as the writing."

Supernatural action from WildStorm

AFTER working together on Top Cow's **The Darkness** and **Magdalena**, the writer/artist team of Marcia Chen and Joe Benitez getting back together at WildStorm for **Wraithborn**, a six-parter Chen describes as a supernatural action adventure book.

"The male protagonist has trained his whole life to be the next wraithborn, – kind of a superhero – but the powers go to a teenaged girl, who has no desire to use them," she explained. "A lot of people want to get this power and this is the perfect time. They have to work together to escape these people. We're going to see how she gets the power and she'll meet the trained hero. A guy with training and no powers, a girl with powers and no desire."

The $2.99 **Wraithborn** is scheduled for a September launch.

the news... people in the news...

director Bart Sears.

The artist, who most recently pencilled **Captain America and the Falcon** for Marvel, is lined up to draw **Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight** #200 – written by Eddie Campbell and Daren White – before teaming up with writer Bruce Jones to relaunch **Warlord** as an ongoing series.

ROMANO Scarpa, the man many consider the master of Italian Disney Comics, passed away on Saturday, April 23 in Fuengirola, Spain. He was 77.

Scarpa began working for Disney in 1953 and continued until just a few months before his death when a long-term illness finally forced him to retire. During his time with the company he created a number of characters including Atomino Bip Bip, Brigitta, Filo Sganga, Trudy, Plottigatt, Paperetta Yè Yè and Bruto.

He is survived by his wife Sandra and daughter Sabina.

Manga bulletins

As traditionally published in Japan, all manga titles are in a 5¼x6" digest format, in black and white and read from right to left unless otherwise stated.

ANOTHER sign of the growing mainstream acceptance of manga is the world's leading publisher of romance and women's fiction deciding to licence Dark Horse to publish its manga titles in the US, Canada, UK and Australia.

The initial deal with Harlequin Enterprises allows for the Oregon-based publisher to release six titles under the Harlequin Ginger Blossom imprint beginning this December with **A Girl in a Million** written by Betty Neels with art by Kako Itoh and **Response** written by Penny Jordan with art by Takako Hashimoto.

The six titles are to be split into two lines. Colour-coded for age levels; the pink line is aimed at younger readers while the purple line is intended for "more sophisticated" readers. New titles for each audience are to be released on approximately a quarterly basis.

All six titles are top sellers from Harlequin's extensive manga operation in Japan, where its licensee, Ohzora Publishing Company, has published manga versions of over 250 Harlequin titles.

A NEW talent discovered through one of Tokyopop's annual Rising Stars of Manga competitions, is to release her first graphic novel through the Los Angeles-based publisher.

M Alice LeGrow's **Bizenghast** is set in the decrepit former mill town of the same name. Long since abandoned, it is now completely out of touch with the modern world.

It is home to Dinah, a teenage orphan who lives in a mansion in the town. She is completely mad but her insanity allows her to see the ghosts that haunt the house and the town. It could also lead her and her friend Vincent to Bizenghast's worst secret.

A 192-pager, the $9.95 first volume ships on August 9.

THE 148-page **Warriors of Legend: Reflections in Sailor Moon** is a look at how **Sailor Moon** creator Naoko Takeuchi took the city and society around her and used it to establish a multi-billion dollar franchise.

Just published by GenVid under its Booksurge imprint, the $12.99 softcover is intended as an accessible introduction to Japanese culture for neophyte manga readers while still furnishing plenty of insights for those who consider themselves more fully informed.

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Freak Brothers ask: "Got any spare change, man?"

Mike Conroy's Frame to Frame

Examining the latest developments between films and comics

ALTHOUGH raising money for a major project is standard business procedure there's something ironic about a Bristol-based animation studio's attempts to get investors interested in its move to bring Gilbert Shelton's **Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers** to the big screen.

While there is something apt about a company named bolexbrothers (after the Bolex camera) looking to make an cartoon version of **Grass Roots**, the lumping together of such icons of the counterculture as Fat Freddy, Freewheelin' Franklin and Phineas Phreak aka Freekowski with the words "very attractive tax incentives available through an Enterprise Investment Scheme (EIS)" is incongruous to say the least.

Not that there's anything wrong with it but I can't help smiling at the idea of The Man – the establishment as epitomised by merchant bankers, stock-brokers and other pillars of the straight community – rushing to put money into a scheme that raises the profile of San Francisco's most famous – or should that be notorious – dope-smoking, hippie dropouts via their local multiplexes.

Mind you, many of the likely investors no doubt were hippies themselves back in the day, so maybe they should be more concerned about what impression their children will get of their parent's youthful antics than about how much money they're going to make out of the project.

Or maybe not. Go with the flow, man.

The Magic Roundabout

But, irony aside, there's a long way to go before the Freak Brothers make their big screen debut. It's not the first time an attempt has been made to get the three fictional denizens of the City by the Bay into a movie. In fact, Universal Pictures first optioned the rights back in 1979. Several others have followed since and we're still waiting.

Getting back to bolexbrothers – you've just got to love that name – the production crew is headed by director David Borthwick, who co-directed the recent feature film version of *The Magic Roundabout*. That movie is also among the credits of two of the producers, Bruce Highham and Andy Leighton, while the third, David Lascelles, lists the TV movie *Wide-Eyed and Legless* among his.

The script is being written by Shelton in collaboration with Paul Basset Davies, who has worked on such shows as *Spitting Image*, *Alas Smith and Jones*, *KYTV* and *News Huddlines*. He also wrote the screenplay for *The Magic Roundabout* and co-wrote the company's forthcoming second feature, the SF movie *Clusterworld*.

One interesting addition to the crew is Van Dyke Parks as music director. Over his more than 40 years in the music business he's worked with everybody from the Beach Boys, Randy Newman and Ry Cooder to Aaron Neville, The Everly Brothers and U2 via Three Dog Night, Carly Simon and Meryl Streep. It's a pretty safe bet the soundtrack will be worth listening to especially if they decide to keep to the music of the era.

I suppose, in the end it'll all come down to how much say Shelton has in the production. But they haven't got the money yet.

Mutant roundabout

There's been a lot happening on *X-Men 3* since director Bryan Singer split to helm *Superman Returns*, not least the departure of his replacement.

Layer Cake's Matthew Vaughn left the production just prior to shooting was to have commenced at the beginning of June. Reportedly he decided he did not want to commute from his London home to Vancouver and Los Angeles, where the film is to be shot.

> ***"I saw a tape of Kelsey [Grammer]'s performance and the emotion in his eyes. He was stunningly good."*** *...Simon Kingberg, writer* X3

With 20th Century Fox determined to keep the movie on schedule for its planned May 2006 premiere, another director was needed in a hurry.

In another slice of irony Brett Ratner has been rushed in. The director of both *Rush Hour* movies as well as *Red Dragon*, he spent a year working on *Superman Returns* before being replaced by Singer. He was also in the running to helm the first *X-Men* film but lost out to Singer.

Frasier's the Beast

Sticking with *X-Men 3*, a seemingly odd piece of news is the casting of Kelsey Grammer as Dr Hank McCoy aka the Beast.

Best-known as the star of *Frasier*, the 50-year-old hardly strikes me as the sort to portray the highly athletic, blue-furred anthropoidal mutant. Wiser heads think otherwise.

Discussing auditions for the role, the movie's writer Simon Kingberg said, "They looked at lots and lots of actors for the part, but the one who came in and gave an absolutely unbelievable performance was Kelsey Grammer.

"The character is 'a cerebral genius trapped in the body of a furry beast.' People don't see him for who he is. I saw a tape of Kelsey's performance and the emotion in his eyes. He was stunningly good," he added.

Just to clarify a point, Kingberg is getting the "written by" credit while Zak Penn only gets "screenplay." According to the Writers Guild of America, the difference is that Kingberg deserves both a "story by" and a "screenplay credit" as he provided the basis for the movie, something "distinct from screenplay and consisting of basic narrative, idea, theme or outline indicating character development and action."

The Guild defines a screenplay as consisting "of individual scenes and full dialogue, together with such prior treatment, basic adaptation, continuity, scenario and dialogue as shall be used in and represent substantial contributions to the final script."

It might just be small print to you and me but getting the right credit could make a huge difference to a film writer's earnings.

Mutant thesaurus

Meanwhile, back at the casting couch, producer Avi Arad, who said the Beast is to have a large role in *X-Men 3*, stated, "Kelsey was born to play the role. When we met with him, you can see that Kelsey has that you'd-better-have-a-dictionary-handy intelligence".

I thought the Beast was more about bouncing gymnastically off walls and leaping on bad guys, not trying to stun them into submission as a walking thesaurus. Who knew?

But, if Grammar's casting as the Beast is a brow-wrinkler, it's far easier to see why *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*' Vinnie Jones has got the part of Professor X's half-brother, Cain Marko aka the rampaging Juggernaut, who is to be part of Magneto's band of evil mutants. Some might suggest the ex-footballer turned actor has been typecast.

Daywalker Spike-d

Marvel is getting into live-action television for the first time since 1990 when it killed off *Incredible Hulk* with a TV movie ending to the highly popular series that launched in 1977.

This time it's Blade that is to get the glass teat treatment as Spike TV attempts to transfer the franchise away from the big screen. Network president Doug Herzog has ordered a two-hour pilot movie featuring the human/vampire hybrid also known as the Daywalker. He's looking to get it on air by early 2006.

"The action-adventure genre is largely ignored in today's television landscape, and we know it is something that our male viewers really want," announced Herzog. "*Blade* is a great movie franchise with an established brand that men already recognise and identify with."

David Goyer – who wrote the film trilogy and directed the final chapter – is on board as executive producer but it's unlikely Wesley Snipes will return to play the title role. Budgetary considerations alone put him out of the picture (ouch!) and his falling out with New Line over *Blade: Trinity* is almost certain to rule him out.

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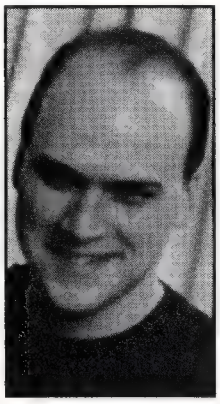
ALEX ROSS ON JUSTICE



DC's forthcoming 12-part epic from the time that continuity forgot

*THE LAUNCH of **Justice** brings Alex Ross, Jim Krueger and Doug Braithwaite – Marvel's **Universe X** and **Paradise X** creative team – to DC. A 12-part series, it also marks Ross's return to interior art.*

*As a taster, **CI** presents an exclusive look at Ross's character sketches alongside the award-winning artist's comments about the project for which he is creating fully-painted finished art over Braithwaite's pencils.*

CI: So what is **Justice**? What's the concept?

Alex Ross: **Justice** is the name I go for once I can't use any I want to use!

I came up with it when we were finishing **Paradise X** and the thought of bringing this creative team over to DC to a book much like we'd being doing for Marvel was exciting, especially given the time I'd invested on DC's key heroes in their classic form. I thought I could sell DC on a sort of permanent *Elseworlds,* an idealistic version where everything about their classic characters stayed the same. That's what **Justice** grew out of.

The exact plot – of a big group of greatest heroes versus a big group of greatest villains in the classic sense – was kind of looking at what have I not creatively done yet? Once I realised the ramifications it would mean for design and art, I thought I've *got* be involved on the art side of this. It can't just be another "I do covers and get to see it every month as it comes in." So I took it as a perfect opportunity for Dougie and I to work together.

When you say greatest villains...

I am talking about the most well known super-villains DC has put into one assemblage like with the *Super Friends* TV show back when Doug and I were kids, or almost kids.

When this show was on there was nothing else really catering for anybody's love of these comics characters on television. There was no more *Batman* TV show and the other cartoons were largely pretty awful.

This would have been at the time of the Filmation stuff?

Yes, that period. After a number of seasons where the JLA hung around with teenagers, they decided to do a season that was basically the Justice League versus their most famous enemies, which they called the Legion of Doom. This was an assembly of villains that had never really been put together in comics... and the funny thing is, in the years since, they still never really did it. Hence the idea of putting this rock star dream team together, every major guy like Riddler, Brainiac, Luthor, Gorilla Grodd, Captain Cold, Bizarro, all those guys that hadn't really been together in one storyline.

Every time I think I've hit upon some kind of original thing that no one has seen the potential of, I think I'm some kind of genius and jump all over it. That's what hopefully came out of this.

You said **Justice** started as an *Elseworlds* book but you imply that it might not be now. Is it still *Elseworlds*?

No. It never was going to be named as *Elseworlds* but essentially what I'd been doing for the last seven years were these oversized books that side-stepped continuity in such a fashion that I was doing the DC heroes in an iconic status that they gave me carte blanche to run with. That led all the way up to me doing a book with the JLA which had Barry Allen and Hal Jordan in it. That was what I wanted to take and put into a series. I didn't want to compromise any of what my standards as a fan were. I didn't want to be bothered about all the odd decisions they have made over 20 years, killing this one or changing that one. Ultimately it's the classic version of each of them.

You said there was a parallel between **Justice** and what you'd done in the large-format books like **JLA: Liberty and Justice**. Are they similar in tone? The earlier books had a certain innocence about them.

I wouldn't say the series has a huge innocence about it. In a sense the way the heroes are featured – as pure icons – has, but the villains get a new sheen by my re-imagining them ever so slightly to make them more deadly or horrifying. Now you look at Brainiac or Black Manta afresh and think, "Oh! That's not so comical any more."

Some of the villains have devolved into jokes. Take Bizarro... a well-known character but now we see him as a goofball. So, can you put a spin on Bizarro that will make people afraid of him? That was the challenge here.

And ultimately the plot is far deadlier than we probably have seen before; certainly with these kind of characters.

Your work at DC differs greatly from your Marvel work, where you were

Above: Ross's classic version of Black Adam. On **Justice**: "It's a big group of famous heroes versus a big group of famous villains in the classic sense." ...*"Black Alex" Ross*

Metallo

Sinestro

willing to go off and explore the ramifications much further. Both have been with icons, so what is it that interests you about recreating the past?

Well, I think anyone coming into this field brings with them a vision from childhood of what we liked about comics, when we had our purest perception of them.

I still have a love of the origins of these characters, of what they originally started as and I try to get back to that as much as possible. I'm trying to channel, say, Joe Shuster for Superman or I'm trying to still communicate some amount of Bob Kane's original Batman design despite being raised on Neal Adams' version. But I don't want it to be just the pure incestuousness of recreating what I obviously read when I was six years old in 1976.

I guess I'm still scratching that itch that I can't seem to get out of, this is my umpteenth kind to tribute to *Super Friends*. One would hope, once it's finished, I'll be done but knowing me it's hard to say

Your peers get involved in continuity and want to tie it all neatly together in some kind of Gordian knot, while you seem to strip it clean.

I guess it's my inability to take what others do and live with it. If somebody decides that Superman is blue for a while, you're stuck with it. Say you're Grant Morrison and you just started writing **Justice League** for the first grouping of the original seven character in over 15 years and they tell you when you're already into it, "Oh, Superman is blue for a year. Live with it." This is the kind of thing I've not really had to deal with, which is kind of absurd because everybody else in the business has while I've been lucky enough to get my own little universe.

As it is right now, I'm talking with DC about other projects and being involved with some of the redesigns for post-**Crisis** next year and collaborating in part with some of the ideas in the **JSA** book that I'm the new cover artist on. So talking to Geoff Johns, at the centre of all this, has been an eye-opening experience of what it's like to deal with the mess of coordinating a continuity that constantly gets ruptured by so many different talents.

I've got to say I'm not sure how well I can play that way when I've had it so much my own way, you know.

The fact that you are allowed to play in your own little ball park must give fans a certain amount of pleasure, because it's isolated, but over there's all part of a headache-inducing intricate continuity.

There's room for both. Part of me is just frustrated that fans claim they want continuity that grows and changes but they never really want it to grow. They've never really tried certain dramatic ideas, which I think Jim Krueger and I did to great effect throughout our **Earth X** series. I think we pushed the Marvel Universe ways that we haven't seen in the last five years of **Ultimate** titles.

And I guess I'm frustrated with the sort of mainstream approach to how they say they are going to be creative when I don't think they accomplish anything they claim.

Do you know Gerry Conway's quote about the Marvel Universe, "They ask for change but all they want is the semblance of change"?

Yeah. I understand that in the context of monthlies and keeping continuity alive. It's the whole thing of killing characters off only to replace them with another person wearing the same costume that you ultimately get used to and forget about the last guy who wore it.

But with **Justice** it's the iconic Justice League: Flash, Martian Manhunter, Wonder Woman, Green Lantern, Aquaman, Superman and Batman?

Yes, to begin with. We go on from those original seven members to include a greater part of the Justice League in the '70s; just stopping short of when Firestorm showed up.

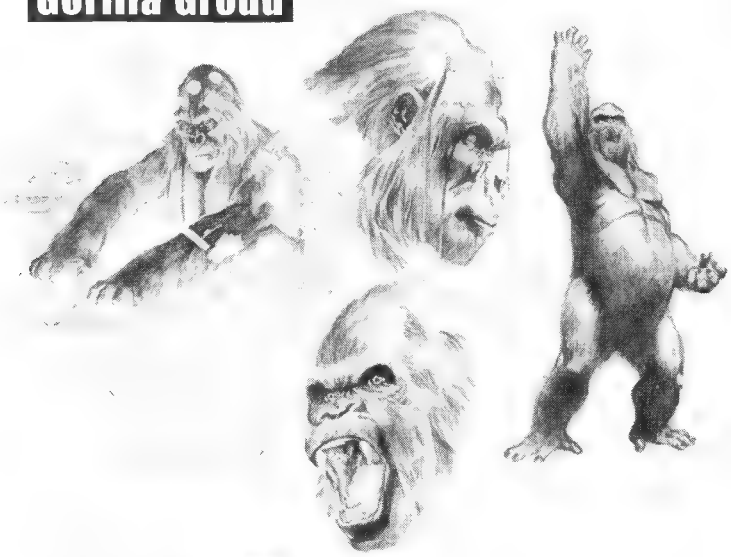
So what's the main theme of the series?

In many ways it's the idea of just how deadly a conflict of such equal levels of superpowers would be with the banding together of criminals in this fashion. When the stakes are the survival of mankind then this kind of event wouldn't be a monthly occurrence. It would be a pretty major one that, in its own way, would be one great story as opposed to many, many different stories happening month by month in the regular ongoing book.

So why not a graphic novel – or maybe two, given the page count. Do you think it more a novel than a serial?

We're taking advantage of the cliffhanger quality of a serialised comic. And it's such a long series, 12 issues of 28-page plus books is a hell of a lot of material. In fact, it's the biggest commitment I've ever made to a series.

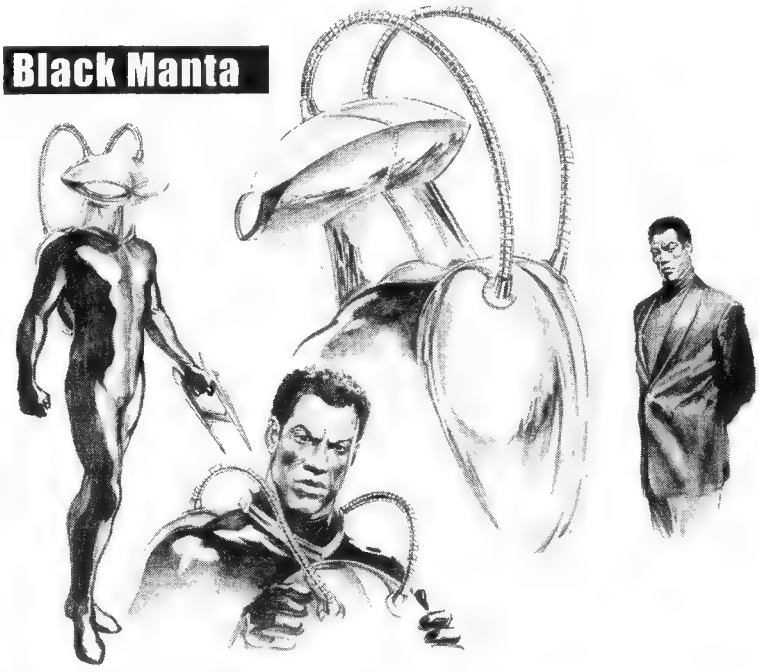
Gorilla Grodd



Cheetah

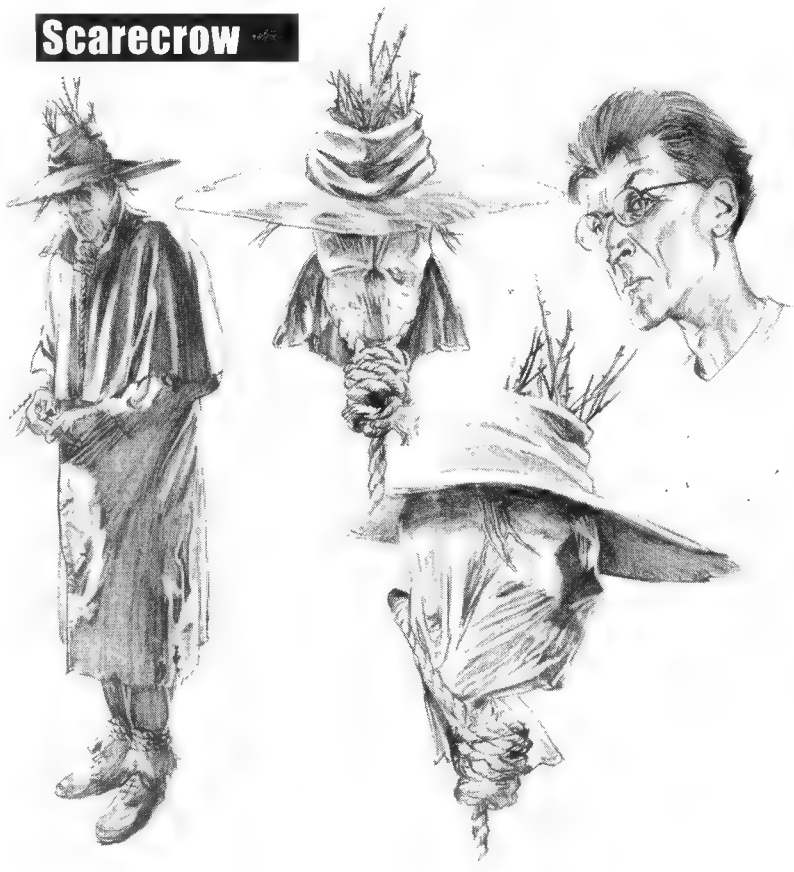
Poison Ivy

Black Manta



The Joker

Scarecrow



Aquaman

Batman

You are obviously the mastermind behind it; the one in the big chair stroking the white cat. So where does Jim Krueger come into the picture and how do the two of you work together?

I'm co-plotting with him. Jim and I just throw all the ideas we can think up into a pot and stir them up. Many times I challenge him with a basic premise, which is what happened with the **Earth X** series. He takes it from there.

It's a constant back and forth bouncing around of ideas we want to apply to these well-known characters. I never write the scripts. That's all Jim but I heavily work them over later with a fine-tooth comb. The reason I always go back to Jim is he's the creator I've most worked with, although I had never drawn up one of his scripts until now.

He has the most rich mind. He listens to everything I put to him about ideas I want included or a change I want made. There is none of the conflict of ego that has often happened with writers I've worked with in the past.

For Jim and me it's just a continuation of the love fest that started with **Earth X** and has gone on to today.

Moving on to Dougie, what is it that you like about his work? After all, he is your most frequent art partner.

I guess so at this point. I think the number of issues he has done versus say Brent Anderson on **Astro City** may be greater. Doug has some phenomenal draughtsmanship and the best figure drawing ability I have ever seen. I was a big fan of his before I had a chance to work with him.

It was a dream come true to work with Doug and I have looked at his art jealously for the last several years thinking, "Man, I would have loved to have painted that".

I was so satisfied with what he'd been giving me for so long that it's an ideal marriage in a way because I know that Doug pencils very similar way to the way I do. There are lots of similar thoughts about layout and there are lots of things he can teach me along the way, so I'm going through a great learning process with Doug as my guide.

But you did those oversized comics with Paul Dini...

I'm better known for covers because people didn't like my sequential work after a while. Even though I was only delivering a book a year – 60-some pages or so – fans got sick of them. They didn't like the format. Going from when I started with **Superman: Peace on Earth** in 1998, sales steadily decreased. I may have bumped it up a little bit with the **JLA** but ultimately fans and retailers voted their reaction as "We're sick of this format".

I could have either taken my ball and gone home or just followed with the inspiration I had, which was to do normal comics again. I wanted to try something I hadn't done, a comic that was much less an event – which is what I can consider **Marvels** and **Kingdom Come** to be. Much more of a standard serialised adventure comic.

Justice is much more like a novel really, so when it's completed it will be this big story that stands on its own; not tied inextricably to contemporary continuity and not demanding that you collect all this other stuff to follow it.

Hopefully we give everyone as much as they need to be able to consume it and understand who shows up in it. I'm sure there'll be the odd character that will get fans moaning, "Well, you never really told me what this guy does and now I'm upset because I have no idea who, say, the Phantom Stranger is." We got accused of that all the time in **Universe X** and **Paradise X** – that we kept referring to characters that we didn't give background information on and that we were having too much fun playing towards a select audience who grew up on this stuff.

You just can't win! But getting back to working with Dougie, the fact that you're painting over his pencils is not that unusual for you. You painted over Jim Lee pencils, albeit for covers, over George Pérez on that enormous **Crisis on Infinite Earths** poster...

I've danced with a lot of different guys, most of whom were heroes of mine like Romita and Pérez and even Neal Adams, where I have done these pieces, doing my best to not obliterate their pencil style, their contours and just add what I can of myself within those parameters.

The thing is I can approach Doug's work as if it's mine. His sensibility, figure drawing, layouts, they are very much the kind of thing that I would want to produce anyway. If I decide I want to improve a hand, a head or whatever, I can take that leap because I consider the work to be an equal collaboration between us.

What it means is that I get a little bit more freedom to feel like I can add stuff, fix stuff or whatever-have-you. There's a certain timidness I feel with other artists – like

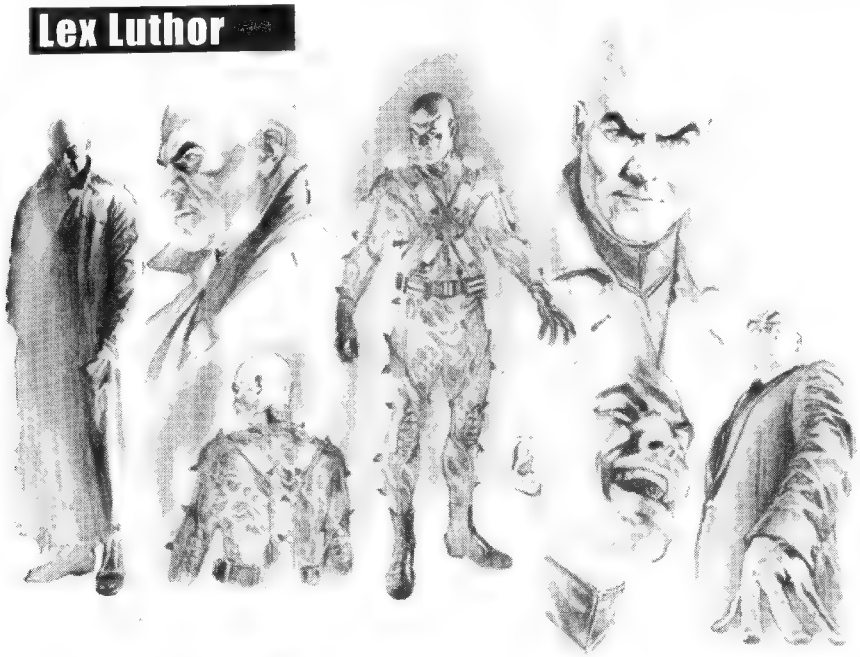
Wonder Woman

Captain Marvel

Green Lantern

The Flash

Lex Luthor



The Riddler

Clayface

in the case of Jim Lee. If the piece gets redrawn by me, like I change every face or body to be Alex Ross-style photo-realistic, what the hell was the point of that? But with Doug it's already there, it's already a realistic figure, it's already so photo-ready that I am just bringing to this additional nuance level.

We're a really good pair in that fashion. It wouldn't have been easily to put anyone else in Doug's place with me.

Because you are painting over his pencils, do you have greater input into the dynamics of the story than you would if you were purely the writer?

I'm mostly keeping my part of the writing side down to technical requests for Jim to put in the script; maybe to say that you do this as low angle and that kind of detail for Doug without actually supplying him layouts. He doesn't need my mucking up his work that way. I gave him a panel kind of layout guide in the first issue and that was it. I gave him nothing in the second and nothing in the third. I might give him something by the fifth issue. That's how much I want to stay out and give him the chance to really shine and have fun.

So while your role and name is probably what will sell the book, you are really a replacement inker, as a painter.

Yeah, a glorified tracer. That is what's become of me.

But it's an absolute blast and reminds me that some of the best collaborations in the past were ones with an equal level of talent on pencils and inks. Like John Romita over Gil Kane on **Amazing Spider-Man** or Murphy Anderson on Curt Swan's **Superman**, guys like that.

But me, I'm a cover artist, right? Why am doing all these story pages if nobody even notices? If nobody gives a damn that I kill myself over this stuff? I'm kind of putting in a last ditch effort in a way, for myself. If fans don't see this and don't take notice of it, then, hell, I'll be that damn cover artist! I'll take that bigger money to do those covers and screw the rest of you.

The truth is it's still very difficult to get anything to sell, we're competing in a very small pool of guys that are selling strong numbers. I'm just one of those guys who's desperate to show that I am not counted out yet.

For the most part, everybody's aware of me and people are generally supportive but, you know, you desire more. You always desire the next best thing.

Working with Dougie, what does it do for your output. If you were doing the whole thing as you did with **Marvels** and **Kingdom Come**, what would it do for your output?

If you think about it, back when I was doing **Marvels** I didn't have the distraction of so much cover work so I was doing, I think, 12 pages a month then; but this was 11 to 12 years ago. By **Kingdom Come**, I was down to 10 pages a month so I could give that much greater care. That remained my staple up though all the books I did including the big books, 10 pages a month. Then there was the research: taking photos of models and ckecking out backgrounds, details and layouts and all that stuff.

Now I'm getting pages that are fully finished so I jump in and I paint the pages in basically half the time I'd done before. So we're producing about 28 pages of story – as opposed to your average 22 story-page comic. It's bimonthly but you're getting a little bit more for your money. That makes my workload around 14 pages a month, two more pages than I did on **Marvels**.

But because of the demand of it being 28 pages or more, you've got this greater nut to crack. Doug kills himself on a lot of the stuff but he's got such a professional speed that he knocks right through issues – sometimes turning around a whole one in three weeks.

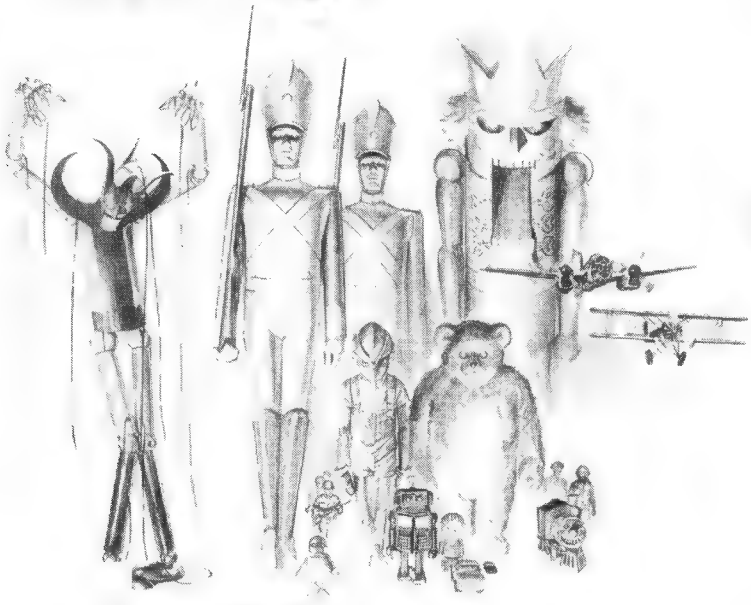
Do you still use photo reference or work purely from Doug's pencils?

I'm still mixing the two because I want to keep that continuous feeling of what people would see in my work before. I still enjoy lifelike reference, I like photographing reality and then putting that reality into this work. It's been a continually exciting project for me to play with reference the way I hadn't before. This time I've got so much reference that had built up on all these different characters over so much time that I can just pick through old photographs without having to travel to see all the different individuals I used to use as models.

I'm still using their pictures but I'm not killing myself getting out on the road every month to take a new batch!

Justice, a $2.99 DC bimonthly by Alex Ross, Jim Krueger and Doug Braithwaite, launches on August 17th with a 40-page first issue.

The Toyman



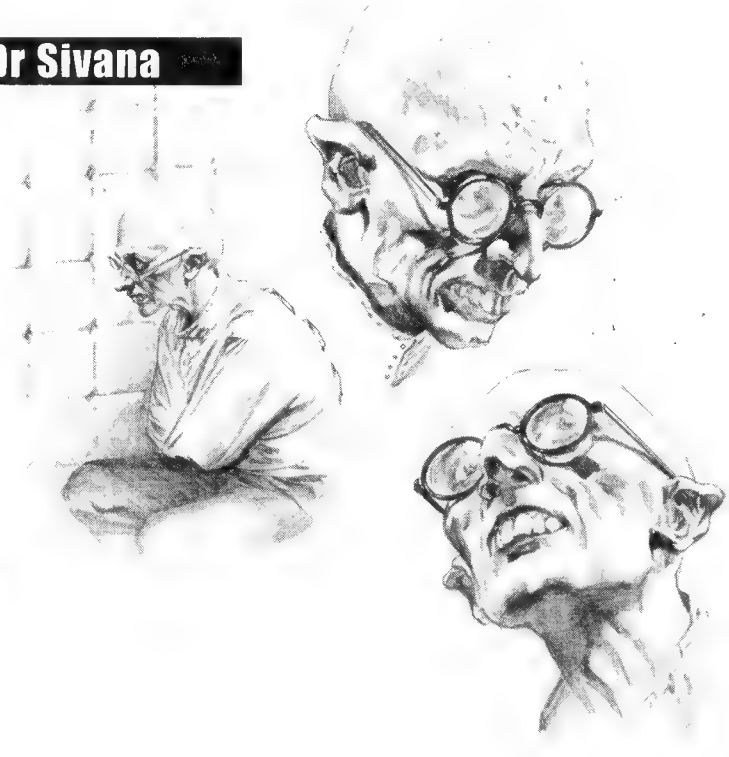
Captain Cold

Giganta

Bizarro

Solomon Grundy

Dr Sivana



Comic Expo: Bristol 2005

With the old guard having stepped down from organising the traditional Spring comics convention in Bristol, John Freeman assesses how the new organisers made out.

OVER 2000 comics fans went to the Spring Comic Expo over two days in Bristol, making the attendance well up on last year's Bristol Comics Festival.

The event marked the launch of artist Liam Sharp's **Event Horizon** anthology, plus Brian Bolland's new Knockabout hardback, **Bolland Strips!**, AP's Expo specials **Mr T** and **Dark Mists**, a host of new small press and indie titles, and a 500-copy ashcan of WildStorm's UK comics characters revival, **Albion**.

Plotted by Alan Moore, scripted by daughter Leah and John Reppion and drawn by Shane Oakley, there's a lot of excitement about this book from longtime UK comic fans. Wrapped in eye-catching covers from Dave Gibbons, Oakley's art is simply stunning, packed with great British comics characters such as Bad Penny, Captain Hurricane, the Steel Claw and more.

"We've put all the characters in the same universe," a packed Expo audience was told by co-writer Leah Moore, who along with husband John read tons of old British comics for research during the writing of the six issue mini. "We've had to change them a little," she reveals, "and grow them up a bit."

"... my first UK convention experience and, I gotta' say, I wasn't disappointed. Compared to the monstrosity that is San Diego, this thing was comics all the way. No Marvel, no DC... and yet, it was still the most comics-centric show I've ever been to."
... Joe Casey (writer: Wildcats)
"One of the best I've ever been to, no shit!" ***... Mike Oeming (artist: Powers)***

"If the design is iconic enough, a character can stand any number of treatments," added Dave Gibbons, addressing concerns that the characters would be unrecognisable in their "modern" forms.

Some of IPC's humour characters, such as Grimly Fiendish, will also appear in the series. "Humour comics are just as much a part of British comics as adventure comics," John Reppion stated. "That's why Grimly is in the book."

"I've got a good feeling about this book," Dave Gibbons commented at the talk. "It's in the right place by the right people at the right time."

"It's ironic a comic that's reinvigorating these British characters has to be cross-licensed by a US company," Leah Moore replied, addressing questions as to why there was to be no UK newsstand reprint of **Albion**.

WildStorm is owned by Time Warner which also owns IPC Media which in turn holds the rights to many of Britain's old comics characters – but no longer publishes comics.

IPC Media publisher Andrew Sumner

"This book collides the fantasy world of British comics with the real world of British comics," commented IPC's Andrew Sumner, who said that such lads' mags as **Uncut** (which, conveniently, he publishes) will be involved in the promotion of the comic when it is released on June 30.

Titan Books' Nick Jones was also on hand to talk a little about the IPC hero collections from the company, starting with **The Spider: King of Crooks**, on sale from 24 June. "We're taking a two-pronged approach," he said. "They'll be good collections for fans and for people who are intrigued by **Albion** and want to know more about the characters."

With strips written by Superman co-creator Jerry Siegel, Titan's hardback edition features a new cover by Garry Leach and exclusive bonus material on the history of the character. A **Steel Claw** collection follows later in the year.

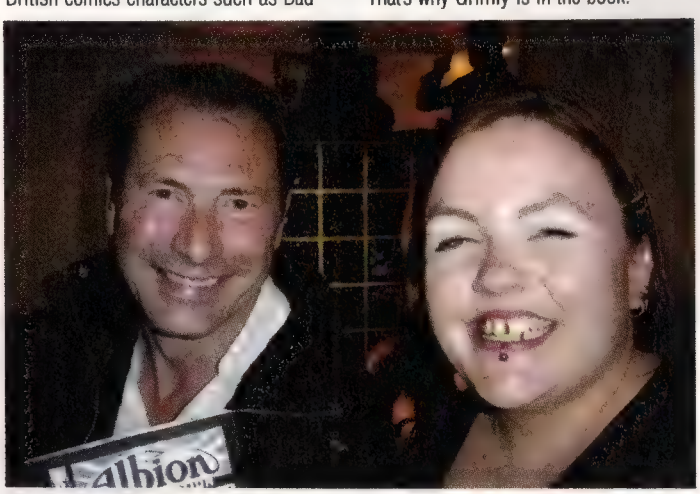
The busy Expo also featured some fantastic indie work, including the graphic novel **Angel Fire** from comics veterans Chris Blythe and Steve Parkhouse; **Brodie's Law** from Pulp Theatre; and much more.

The Expo also reflected the incred-ible amount of small press in the UK. Top of the list has to be the annual release of Gary Spencer Millidge's terrific **Strangehaven**, a bizarre, partly *The Prisoner*-inspired tale set in a less than idyllic British country village no-one seems to be able to escape.

Other stand-out titles included Carl Critchow's hilarious sword and sorcery satire **Thrud the Barbarian** and **Zarjaz** – the revived **2000AD** fanzine featuring stunning art by David Gray (watch out for this guy – I have a feeling he's going to be huge).

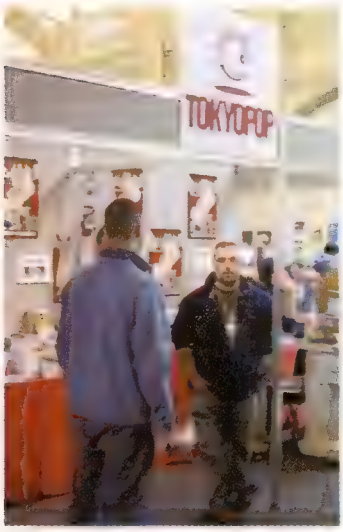
A personal favourite at this event was the work of the Blink Twice gang, publishers of **Malcolm Magic** and **Tusk**.

One Last Time, a collection of



*Top: Veteran Dan Dare artist Don Harley, now contributing to **Spaceship Away**. Top right: Batman protects the Tozzer stand from, well, nobody really. Above left: David (**V for Vendetta**) Lloyd, the **Albion** ashcan and its co-author Leah Moore. Above right: The **Event Horizon** booth, ever crowded by fans and contributors!*

Picture credits (with thanks): Tozzer.com, downthetubes.net and moorereppion.blogspot.com. Visit their sites for more Expo words and visuals. And, for the biggest Expo photo file, visit Engine Comics site: www.flickr.com/photos/barryrenshaw/sets/32753/.



gorgeous strips by Graeme Neil Reid, comprising of stories he's written and drawn over several years, proved popular. But then, Graeme's strong black and white work has wowed the readers of several British fanzines for some time.

Also launching was the third book of **Devilchild**, a terrific title by Andy Winter centring on the Devil's son who is far from happy to have discovered his heritage. a 92 page A4 perfect bound title, it is illustrated by Duane Leslie.

In addition to catching up with many old friends and meeting several new ones, I finally met the Bailey Brothaz at this event, two creators who have just published their first foray into self publishing. Carl and Craig Bailey's **BloodznCripz** is a powerful tale, centring on the vicious lives of an LA street gang. Definitely not for the faint hearted but well worth tracking down for the stunning black and white art.

The talks themselves provided a non-stop barrage, from *Talking Transformers* to the **Event Horizon** launch, AP's **Mr T** and **The Lexian Chronicles**, Mike Carey on **Hellblazer** and **Lucifer**, the sixth hilarious *Hypotheticals* (thanks to Lee Barnett and Dave Gibbons), a DC Thomson *(You're Having a Laff!)* panel, and *The Mighty World of Marvel*.

Also with the UK's biggest-ever artist signing and sketching sessions, the Bristol Expo was a well-organised, thoroughly enjoyable, well attended event, to the credit of organisers Mike Allwood of Area 51 and this very magazine.

Attendees should also be congratulated for breaking the bar take record of the Bristol Ramada, consuming nine times the average for the hotel weekend. Food came a poor second, at only five times the norm.

I'm already looking forward to the next Bristol Expo on May 13-14 May, 2006 with special guests Roy Thomas, Geoff Johns and Howard Chaykin. And, of course, the team's first Brighton Expo which is only five months away, on November 19-20.

If you'd care to follow up on John Freeman's recommended titles, you can get ordering information and more online:

Angelfire *..<www.shatteredframes.com>*
Bloodzncripz*..<www.bloodzncripz.co.uk>*
Brodie's Law *...<www.brodieslaw.com>*
Devilchild *.....<www.devil-child.com>*
Event Horizon *.....<www.mamtor.com>*
Mr T *.....<www.apcomics.com>*
One Last Time *....<www.gnreid.co.uk>*
Strangehaven *.....<www.millidge.com>*
Thrud *....<www.thrudthebarbarian.com>*
Tusk *.....<www.malcolmmagic.com>*
Zarjaz *.....<www.zarjaz.blogspot.com>*

Top: The Tokyopop and Brodie's Law booths. Above: Knockabout surprised all with the unannounced Gilbert Shelton. Above right: Blink Twice, larger than life.

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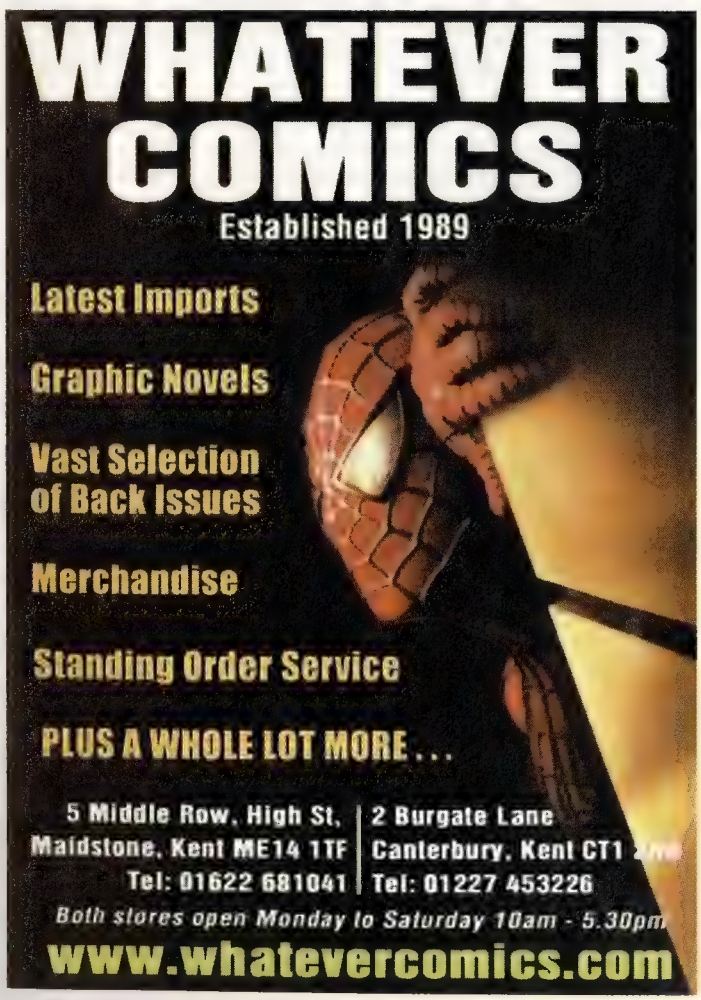


These things are sent to try us...

Talking Shop with Stephen Holland

Reminding people there's a real mainstream out there

Apologies.

I don't yet know if I'm apologising for having missed for a month, or for the quality of these last-minute contents – probably both – it depends on whether you're reading this in **CI** #185 or #186. I'm on the knife-edge of a deadline I've only just become aware of, on account of having taken an unanticipated detour via some fists and the pavement.

So my face is experiencing hitherto unencountered shapes and colours, my neck is decidedly wonky, and my brain's all over the place (metaphorically – it's not splattered all over the concrete, as far as I'm aware). Will you be able to tell the difference? I doubt it.

Serves me right for that column on violence, blithely pronouncing we'd barely seen it, whilst forgetting to touch wood. I touched a huge supporting column of it on Wednesday. Well, my head did.

But it suddenly occurred to me: why isn't Peter Parker's face a constantly shifting shade of swollen purple? The walking gansta clichés I swapped unpleasantries with were neither superhumanly enhanced, nor wearing adamantium oven gloves, yet one of my eyes currently resembles a medium-sized, skinned beetroot and I've a fetching set of red tramlines scraped down the side of my head. Spider-Man, on the other hand, gets smacked about the rooftops by loons in leotards every five seconds, and only gets the band aids out once every three years.

> It suddenly occurred to me: Why isn't Peter Parker's face a constantly shifting shade of swollen purple?

Other perplexing questions include, "Whilst wearing sunglasses to keep his optic beams at bay, how come Cyclops' cheeks aren't continually sliced to smithereens by the reflected concussion?", "Has Iceman permanently impaired his reproductive potential?" (think about that) and, "How come Nick Fury's such an ace shot, when with one eye patched, he has no sense of distance?" Lastly (though feel free to write in your own mystifications), "Why do both major superhero teams boast archers in their midst?" I can't remember the last time I saw a SWAT squad equipped with bows and arrows.

On a wider note: "Comics on parenthood – what took so long?" Thankfully not everyone on the planet's a parent, otherwise we'd have an even greater population explosion than the one being explored with such great skill in **Concrete: The Human Dilemma**. But it's a common condition (again, thankfully, or we'd have run out of customers by now), so what I can't work out is what took everyone so long to start creating comics on the travails (weak pun intended, dictionary recommended) of bringing up children.

And now they're here, why aren't they best sellers? Isn't it something so many of you can relate to? That you want to read about?

The last serious attempt was **Silly Daddy**, though for all the imagination that Chapietta brought to the table, it wasn't the most accessible of reads. But now we have Simone Lia's **Fluffy** (albeit disguised as a surreal, comedy bunny moment), Andi Watson's **Little Star** (England's finest comicbook fiction creator, whose only equal to my mind is Nabiel Kanan), and any day now top comedian Kyle Baker (**Why I Hate Saturn**, etc.) will relaunch his own family into the spotlight with a regular comic to complement the two **Kyle Baker, Cartoonist** graphic novels.

Kids: they're hilariously naïve, often infuriating, and either we've been them ourselves or are trying to do to a better job than our parents at preparing a new generation for this mixed-up world. Instant Box Office successes in any medium, you'd think.

Little Star in particular deserves a closer inspection, because it's no simplistic, light-weight bundle of "aww". It's about what happens to your life as an individual with aspirations outside of your newfound role, as someone who used go out on the town to meet mates or just spend time with your girlfriend/boyfriend/husband/wife... when you find yourself in a relationship with *three* people, now that all your attention is suddenly diverted into the single priority of being there for your child, day *and* night, whilst ensuring you prepare for the future. Can you move into the right catchment area for a decent school, will the house be big enough, and who will work when and for how long? Will you both work and use a nursery? And why does the young 'un want Mummy when you're Daddy, or Daddy when you're Mummy?

OK, I'm no parent. But I know many who are, and it's this sort of insight into my friends' lives I find so absorbing.

Andi Watson's been creating these sort of comics about you or your mates for years. New job in a strange enviroment? **Slow News Day**. Relationship in trouble through unemployment, and perhaps a little smugness from those you thought were friends? **Breakfast After Noon**. Just been dumped? Err, **Dumped**. **Little Star** is currently on its third issue and all the above are freely available from distributors as books, but I think one of the problems is information.

For retailers, Diamond Distributor's sales focus is almost exclusively on superheroes. Their magazine covers are all superhero-orientated, their order forms equally so. I think it's criminal that Diamond UK doesn't do more for British comics, not even a nod on their own customised order forms, or the occasional sales pitch on their monthly emails.

For readers, where do you find out about them, outside of **The Comics Journal** (a little dauntingly "academic" and dry) or Paul Gravett's vital pages in this very magazine? Even here, one look at whatever the news team has decided to fill the front 30 pages with (and plop onto the cover) would give you the impression these sort of titles simply aren't being published. They are, and I find it... *infuriating* that those with the power to really make a difference aren't playing their part.

Still, Hawkeye and Green Arrow, eh? You'd have thought they'd at least pack a pistol as back-up.

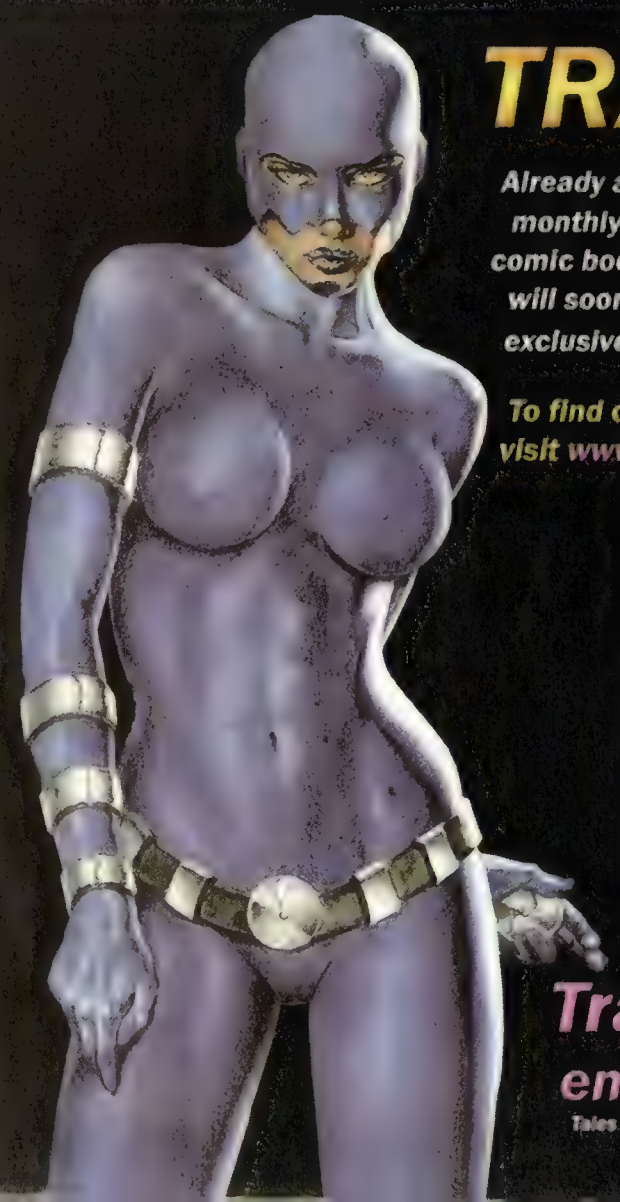
Stephen Holland runs Page 45, a comic shop in Nottingham UK with Mark Simpson and Tom Rosin. His head hurts.

Tales Of MIDNIGHT

Written and Created By Francis Lee

Series Two of the comic launched
August 2005 at MEMORABILIA
Special Limited Edition Covers will be available on first prints of the comic
ORDER YOURS NOW from your local store

www.talesofmidnight.com



TRADING CARDS

Already a huge success internationally thanks to being published monthly in the pages of PLAYTIMES Urban Vinyl magazine, this comic book series that is currently being developed for film and TV will soon appear in a brand new series of trading cards produced exclusively by **New image Reproductions**

To find out more about other great Tales Of Midnight products visit www.talesofmidnight.com and www.beyondstarlight.co.uk

Contact your local store for details

Trade enquiries welcome

email info@beyondstarlight.net

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Q&A

345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ editorial@comicsinternational.com

Baffle us with comics questions, or save us with answers!

Stan Lee admirer

Robert Menzies, 10 Cumnock Drive, Barrhead, Glasgow G78 2HT

DOES anyone know if it's possible to buy a poster – or better yet, a life-sized cardboard standee – of Stan 'The Man' Lee?

Q&A Brains Trust recruit Craig Johnson leaps in: A few years ago you could indeed buy a Stan Lee poster, but it's long out of print and nowadays you'll need to keep an eye on eBay for it. In fact, as I write this there is one currently for sale. Assuming you're on the internet, my advice is that you should check www.ebay.com rather than the UK variant to get the best coverage.

As for a Stan standee, the answer, sadly, is no.

However, if you'd care to visit www.almostbreathing.com you can buy some software from them that will let you make one of your very own!

Spider-Man strip

Andy Jones
Rainhill, Merseyside

HAS Lee and Romita's stint on the Spider-Man newspaper strip ever been collected, or is there a chance it might be?

Craig Johnson again: No and no. It's not on any Marvel schedule, it's not being talked about by the reprint team – either publically or in response to direct questions. The best answer you'll get so far is "maybe one day but don't hold your breath".

John M. Burns

Andy Jones
Rainhill, Merseyside

HAS there ever been a compilation of any of John M. Burns' newspaper or pre-**2000AD** strips?

David Roach joins in: I think John M. Burns should be regarded as a national treasure, or at the very least as the country's greatest living comics artist. Over the course of his very long career, Burns has drawn a lot of newspaper strips which, as best as I can figure out, are as follows:

The Seekers *(1964-1971)*
The Tuckwells *(1966)*
Danielle *(1973-1974)*
Matt Marriott *(1977)*
Modesty Blaise *(1978-1979)*
George and Lynne *(1979-1984)*
Smithie *(1980)*
The Royals *(1981)*
Eartha *(1982)*
Jane *(1985-1989)*
The Flatmates *(1980s?)*

For Germany he also drew the Julia *and* Lilli *strips in the '80s and '90s .*

Typically for this country precious little has been reprinted here (I know of at least one George and Lynne *book but that features Burns' succesor on the feature, Josep Gual).*

But luckily for collectors there have been some collections produced abroad. Probably the most significant reprinting is The Seekers *which was collected in the newspaper format fanzine* ***The Menomonee Falls Gazette*** *(issues 95 to 226) and* ***The Comic Reader*** *(issues 171 to 198).* ***The Comic Reader*** *issues should be around in some numbers.*

There has also been a gorgeous and enormous Italian hardback book in recent years although, inevitably, in Italian. Another essential purchase is Nick Landau's old British fanzine ***Comic Media*** *which interviewed Burns in issue 10 and reprinted* The Seekers *in that and the following issue.*

Elsewhere, Ken Pierce released a compact softcover reprint of Danielle *some time ago. More recently Burns'* Modesty *strips were reprinted in* ***Comic Reviews Modesty Blaise Quarterly Magazine*** *(issues 15 to 17) although I've never actually seen a copy. That's about it for his strips, I'm afraid, although if I had my way much more would be available! I'd love to see a collection of Burns' gorgeous full-colour cavegirl strip* Eartha *which was no literary masterpiece but ravishingly beautiful to look at.*

QUALITY Communications ONLINE

www.qualitycommunications.co.uk

Presenting your gateway to the home of COMICS INTERNATIONAL. Featuring reviews, comment, news, history, the CI blog, readers' forum and more...

In addition to its news and nostalgia, movie preview features, extensive listings and Quality back issues pages (Warrior, Comix, Toy Max, House of Hammer, Starburst and more), it also offers you your best excuse ever to COME DOWN TO BRIGHTON!

In November, Quality is hosting the country's biggest-ever comics convention. Following the huge success of its sister Spring event in Bristol, this promises to be even better. As well as a host of big-name guests, leading dealers and the cream of the burgeoning indie and small press market, this is the event which is bringing back to Britain the top international publishers. Majors not yet signed... see over!

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WHY BRIGHTON AND WHY TWO A YEAR...

BRITAIN has a long tradition of annual gathering of comics fans and creatives, dating back to Birmingham, 1968, whether under the banner of Comicon, UKCAC, Comic Festival or now Comic Expo. But, while mainland Europe has attracted between 100,000 and 300,000 guests to similar events in Spain, Italy and France, Britain has very much been in its shadow.

The new Comic Expo team is about to change that, and with Britain being the home of comics, intends to challenge the dominance that Europe has enjoyed for over 25 years.

The location of the major UK annual convention has moved between Birmingham, Sheffield, London and Manchester and for the last six years Bristol. With Comic Expo now successfully managing that event (www.comicexpo.net) in the spring, we're not looking to disrupt things. But it has reached its maximum size and we believe Britain deserves a larger showcase event, which can happily coexist with the Bristol Comic Expo by being held much later in the year.

Brighton is as close to Gatwick International Airport as London and has become a key centre for festivals and conventions, rivalling and often beating established competition from Edinburgh and London.

By bringing the event back to the home counties, with its more direct acces, we believe attendance will be boosted considerably.

We also believe that the industry's high profile through Hollywood coupled with our major advertising and publicity campaign (locally, nationally and internationally) will put the annual Brighton Comic Expo on the world calender for comics events.

One innovation this November will guarantee a far greater involvement by overseas publishers and creators. A 3-day conference for comics, games and animation creatives and businesses is taking place immediately before the weekend (www.procon2005.co.uk) which makes it far more attractive for visitors from as far afield as California and Japan. While such travellers have always thought twice about spending as long in transit as they would at a traditional UK event, we are now offering them a 5-day package. They can spend three days promoting their lines to the trade and networking with like minds, then – only four weeks before Christmas – stay on to promote their product to fans and general public alike.

With the added bonus of Comic Expo (Brighton) being organised by the publishers of the industry's trade magazine, **Comics International** (www.qualitycommunications.co.uk) it means the event will have a far higher profile than ever before. A gathering worthy of the splendid Hilton Metropole's Oxford Suite – without doubt the city's most prestigious location for major events, hosting everything from political party conferences to multinational summits.

Also by offering inexpensive booths for major exhibitors as well as regular tables for artists, traders and small press, the entire image of the UK industry is considerably raised.

Further information is available through the Comic Expo (Brighton) website, www.comicexpo.biz. So be sure to bookmark the page and visit it regularly for update information about this exciting and long-overdue profile boost for UK comics.

Left: The Brighton seafront Hilton Metropole hotel and a fraction of its massive Oxford Suite. Two sides of the Gallery mezzanine area which surrounds the entire exhibition hall can also be seen.

A standard booth before stocking...

A standard booth during stocking...

...and the after stocking is up to you!

YOU'LL NEVER WANT TO LOOK AT A TRESTLE TABLE AGAIN!

These booths really are fantastic. If you're a key player, or wanting to be, they are much smarter for your business than trestle tables and, for the extra cost, they multiply your available display area tremendously.Not only do you get a standard table for the front of your booth, but you also have a massive back wall display area plus side walls and by placing your table against the back wall, the facility for customers to walk into your booth area rather than be jostled in the aisles. That means, as well as a more direct selling space, with its self-contained area, you get four times the space you would have from a single table and the opportunity to make your company stand out as a mover and shaker.

A standard booth, 3m wide by 2m deep (10ft x 6.5ft)

In addition to the hotel's various halls in which talks, panels and signings will be taking place, the Hilton Metropole's enormous and stylish Oxford Suite is large enough to accomodate almost 100 booths on the ground floor alone and can allow for a flow-through traffic of up to 3,000 potential buyers. Plus it has a unique advantage in its mezzanine gallery area above the main hall which runs around all four walls. Not only will this large area cater for events across the weekend, but it also provides attendees with a vantage point to look down into the main hall from above and pinpoint the booths that they wish to visit.

A premium (double) booth, measuring 6m wide by 2m deep (20ft x 6.5ft)

Adjacent to the Oxford Suite is another massive hall, the Durham Suite, that we are using for catering and art displays. With its only entrance being through the Oxford Suite, you know you will be guaranteed repeat visitors throughout the weekend. After all, even at conventions people still need food, whether for the mind or the stomach! . . . And as well as serving breakfasts, snacks and drinks, it's licensed too.

For easy access and identification, all booths will carry numbers and will be provided with name plates.

So, when booking, be sure to tell us what name you wanted printed on your booth(s).

A massive triple booth, measuring 9m wide by 2m deep (30ft x 6.5ft)

Comic Expo (Brighton) 2005: Exhibitor Booking Form

YOUR EXHIBITOR REQUIREMENTS	Cost per	Quantity Required	Total	
Standard Booth (single unit) (charge includes display table, 2 chairs, 2 Expo tickets)	£350.00		£	1
Premium Booth (double unit) (charge includes 2 display tables, 4 chairs, 4 Expo tickets)	£650.00		£	2
Deluxe Booth (triple unit with four tables) (charge includes 4 display tables, 6 chairs, 6 Expo tickets)	£900.00		£	3
Dealer single table (charge includes 2 chairs and 2 Expo tickets, no wall space)	£200.00		£	4
Small Press single table (charge includes 2 chairs and 2 Expo ticket, no wall space)	£95.00		£	5
Artists Alley single table (charge includes 2 chairs and 2 Expo tickets, no wall space)	£75.00		£	6
OPTIONAL EXTRAS	Cost per	Quantity Required		
1 x 500 watt socket and 2 spotlights	£75.00		£	7
1 x 500 watt socket and 1 x 5ft fluorescent light	£75.00		£	8
Poster Display Boards (for table holders) 2m x 1m with velcro fixings – a great add-on & backdrop!	£22.00		£	9
Total cost of stands and services (all above are excluding VAT)			£	
10% deposit (attached with this booking form)			£	

Company name/trading name .....

Name to appear on booth (if different to above) .....

Invoice address (1) .....

Invoice address (2) .....

Invoice address (3) ..... Postcode .....

Tel (daytime) ..... evening .....

E-mail ..... Website .....

Contact ..... Signature .....

Contact's position (circle whether company/partnership/sole trader) .....

Cheques should be made payable to QUALITY COMMUNICATIONS LTD.

Exhibitors requiring rates for larger booth areas, including 8-booth islands, please enquire.

To book your exhibition space, simply complete this form and return it to us along with 10% of the total amount due by the earlybird booking closing date of July 4th.

Balance will be due eight weeks prior to the event, by September 25, against the invoice which will be despatched with your free exhibitor passes and joining instructions.

Any additional exhibitor passes required may be ordered at £5 each (up to a limit of two extra per table/booth).

Cards taken

Or PayPal online

Cancellations: Full refund of deposit will be made on any cancellations in writing received prior to balance due date. On cancellations made after September 25, refunds will only be issued in the event of the reselling of your space.

Rates given are for the full two days Saturday-Sunday November 19-20 plus access to the halls on Friday pm, November 18th, for exhibitors to set up.

Overnight storage in the Hilton Metropole on the night of Sunday 20th November is a free service being offered should exhibitors wish to leave Monday, November 21st.

Upon our receipt of this booking form with full 10% net deposit (excluding VAT), exhibitor's space is guaranteed.

Upon invoicing, UK exhibitors will have VAT added at 17.5% for all taxable items. No tax is applied to invoices for overseas exhibitors.

Overseas exhibitors: One pound sterling is approximately two US dollars and 1.5 euros. Check for exact rate of exchange when booking.

The size of 2m x 0.75m (6ft x 2.5ft) is the same for stand-alone dealer/artist/small press tables and booth unit tables.

Comic Expo passes are included in the exhibitor's pack, plus inclusion in the Souvenir Magazine listings. We will inform you of all other advertising and promotional opportunities in due course.

Please refer to our website <www.comicexpo.biz> for updates.

Note: In signing this form, exhibitors agree to accept full responsibility for any damage to the above hired exhibition stands and equipment.

This completed form, together with the 10% deposit (payable to Quality Communications Ltd) should be sent to:
Area 51, Dept: Comic Expo (Brighton) 2005, 230 Gloucester Rd, Horfield, Bristol BS7 8NZ (tel: 0117 924 4655)

PLEASE CUT ALONG DOTTED LINE

Corto Maltese: The Call of the Sea

Novel Graphics by Paul Gravett

Highlighting the latest and best in graphic novels

THE FAMOUS author of **The Name of The Rose**, Umberto Eco said it all: "When I want to relax I read an essay by Engels. When I want something more serious, I read **Corto Maltese**."

Our first sighting of him is through the telescope of the pirate Rasputin. He spies Corto, tied spreadeagled and half-naked to a raft, left to the mercy of the Pacific ocean. Corto is rescued by the Russian rogue, whose crew have also picked up two teenage cousins lost at sea, Cain and Pandora Groovesnore. *The Ballad of the Salt Sea*, serialized from 1967 in Italian magazine **Sgt Kirk**, relates their encounters in the South Seas with pirates, natives, and opposing navies around the time of the outbreak of the First World War. From then on, wherever, whenever, this globe-trotting free spirit washes up, Corto Maltese is bound to become a part of history in the making.

Hugo Pratt was also a relative of William Pratt, better known as Boris Karloff.

It seems Corto was born in 1887 in La Valletta in Malta, which gave him his name (Frank Miller named a country after him in **Dark Knight Returns** as a tribute). The illegitimate son of a gypsy woman from Seville and a British sailor from Tintagel, his choice of a seafaring life was inevitable.

The life of his Italian creator Hugo Pratt was almost as adventurous. Living in a variety of countries, multi-lingual and widely read, he was fascinated by the cultures of the world. Hugo Pratt was also a relative of William Pratt, better known as Boris Karloff.

Pratt himself had seen his share of scrapes, at one point in 1964 becoming lost, presumed dead, in the Amazon rainforest until he was rescued by Indian tribesmen.

His crisscrossing of the globe was a constant source of ideas for his comics. Other huge influences were Milton Caniff's chiaroscuro or light-and-dark graphic approach on the newspaper adventure strip **Terry and the Pirates** and Caniff's enthusiasm for research and authenticity. Out of these ingredients Pratt imagined the rugged, enigmatic adventurer Corto, in his cap, earring and bellbottoms, whom he could involve with the real events, places, and people of early 20th century history.

For example in **The Celts**, Corto plays a part in the Irish Rising by helping the nationalists take revenge on British officers for murdering a Sinn Fein informant. In Ethiopia in 1940, Pratt aged 13 was enrolled by his father in Italy's fascist army: "I was Mussolini's youngest soldier."

By the end of the war, Pratt was on the Allies' side and steeped in the country's culture. In **Corto in Africa**, Pratt takes Corto to Ethiopia, where he joins the Beni-Amer freedom fighter Cush.

In 1919 Corto winds up in another hot spot, the Trans-Siberian railway, where he is mistakenly shot down by an armoured train and presented to the Russian Duchess in control of its cargo of gold. The graphic novel **Corto in Siberia** was made into a moody colour animated feature film in 2002, while over the years Antonio Banderas, Christopher Lambert and Viggo Mortensen have all been in the running to play Corto in a live-action movie or TV series.

Pratt himself was born and raised in Venice and sent Corto there in **Fable of Venice** to trace a legendary emerald, ending up entangled in the secret world of Freemasons.

Of the 12 Corto books, eight have so far been translated into English, first by NBM Publishing and then by the UK's Harvill Press. Scandalously, they are now out of print, but the two Harvill books show up easily second hand. Good sites to start exploring include http://mapage.noos.fr/dardelf3/Corto.html and http://home.c2i.net/tzara/pratt/

Pratt was also a passionate bibliophile. In later life he designed his mansion outside Lausanne, Switzerland as a library to house his collection of 30,000 books, each room devoted to a different country, period, or subject. Often it was a mystery from the past in one of his books that would trigger his desire to set out for another destination and look for clues there himself. He told his biographer Dominique Petitfaux, "For me, my travels have been the chance to go to a place that already exists in my imagination."

First-hand experience from travel or knowledge gleaned from books, Pratt embraced them both and made no distinction between them, in his life and in his captivating Corto Maltese graphic novels. The line between creator and creation was also blurred.

Writing a tribute to his friend Pratt after his death, Umberto Eco recalled introducing him to his daughter in Milan. "At one stage, she took me aside to whisper to me, "But Corto Maltese, it's him!" Only children can see that the emperor has no clothes. Corto Maltese is long-limbed, thin, athletic, with an art nouveau grace, virile yet effeminate. Pratt was rather short, stocky, almost portly, with a heavy face. But that day, I took a good look at him, lit from behind: yes, it really was Corto Maltese."

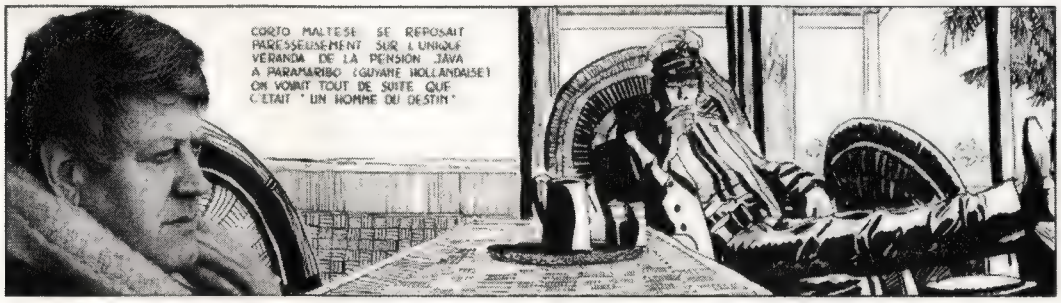
As for the sailor's eventual fate, Pratt never confirmed it and rumours abounded. One clue, however, was given by Pratt from the very start in the first issue of **Sgt Kirk**, in his 1967 introduction to *The Ballad of the Salt Sea*. This consisted of a letter dated 1965, which quoted from another undated letter by Pandora Groovesnore reporting the death of Corto's friend, the Maori warrior Tarao.

"[Tarao's] death leaves a great emptiness among us, but especially for Uncle Corto, whom I am worried about at the moment. Those two understood each other perfectly, they were inseparable. Now, when I see Uncle Corto sitting there alone, his eyes dimmed, facing the great sea which used to be his, my heart breaks."

It seems that to the end, Pratt, like Corto, would hear the call of the high seas, of one last great adventure. Three years before his death, Pratt and his close collaborator Patrizia Zanotti realized a dream of a long journey around the South Pacific.

They visited Samoa and Robert Louis Stevenson's tomb, and the islands where Corto's voyages had begun.

The circle was complete.


CORTO MALTESE SE REPOSAIT PARESSEUSEMENT SUR L'UNIQUE VERANDA DE LA PENSION JAVA A PARAMARIBO (GUYANE HOLLANDAISE) ON VOYAIT TOUT DE SUITE QUE C'ETAIT "UN HOMME DU DESTIN"

Above: Creator Hugo Pratt looks on while Corto Maltese relaxes. Top: a surprised Corto and a 1934 Terry by Milton Canniff.

PG tips

So many treats to come – can you afford not to make room on your bookshelves for some of these gems?

Can Rock & Roll Save the World
(Ian Shirley: SAF Publishing)
July .....£17.99/$24.95
This will be massive! From Frank Sinatra to the White Stripes and everything in between, the multiple, little-explored links between comics and music are celebrated in this pumped-up 256-page paperback. Chapters include: comic artists who have made records; musicians who have made comics; romance comics based on songs; fictional bands like The Archies and Gorillaz; plus album art, posters, over 120 interviews, all wrapped in a Mike Allred cover.

Ian Shirley launches the book at the ICA on July 20th in discussion with Savage Pencil, Hunt Emerson and Flameboy (artist on the Cobain, Eminem and forthcoming Tupac bios from Omnibus) followed by a screening of a documentary on the late Todd Loren's rock and roll comics. See www.ica.org.uk for details.

...www.safpublishing.com

Embroideries
(Marjane Satrapi; Jonathan Cape)
June.....£12.99
"Let her air out her heart. There's nothing better than talking!" That's the advice from the grandma of Satrapi, author of the two-volume bestseller **Persepolis**, in her very frank, very funny record of what Iranian women discuss among themselves. Yes, it's no different than anywhere else: it's mostly about men and sex and this smart little hardback will have you in stitches.

As for that title, she is not just referring to these ladies' skills as seamstresses, or at elaborating their confessional yarns. She is also describing the practice in Iran of "restoring" a woman's lost virginity. Humour and insight in equal measure.

...www.randomhouse.co.uk

Foul Play
(Grant Geissman; Harper Design)
June.....$29.95
Foul Play, that ghoulish baseball game, with intestines for base lines, severed arm for a bat and decapitated head for the ball, must be one of the most notorious EC horror schlockers of them all. Here it's reprinted straight from the pulpy comicbook as one of a lucky 13 classics, plus one never-before-published EC story, *Wanted for Murder!*, drawn by Al Williamson for the aborted Picto-Fiction magazine **Crime Illustrated #3**. Before each tale, Geissman profiles the 14 artists, sprinkling loads of wonderful rare and unseen art and artefacts. EC newbie or fan-addict, you need this all-colour 272-page tome. Choke!

...www.harpercollins.com

Everett Raymond Kinstler
(Jim Vadenboncoeur Jr & Kinstler; JVJ Publ) August.....$44.95
"It's about time!", in the words of admirer Sergio Aragones. At last, a 240-page authorized, copiously-illustrated biography and art book on this American illustration legend, from 1942 to 1962, from "uneducated kid" to bravura comic book and pulp magazine illustrator to portrait painter of presidents. This is going to be gorgeous to look at and fascinating to read for its first-hand memories.

...www.bpid.com

Advance Listings

READERS: You can use this Advance Listings *section as an order form with your direct market store or mail order supplier. Simply mark the items you require, copy or remove these pages (or list them on a separate piece of paper) and give it to your supplier, together with a note of your name, address and phone number to guarantee not missing any of the new titles being published. Certain suppliers may not accept standing orders, so check with them first. All prices of US titles listed are in dollars. Import prices are usually converted at a rate of $1.00 = 85p UK sterling. Shipping dates given are the earliest date product will reach stores. All dates, prices and information are assumed to be accurate as provided by publishers.* *Compiled by Jim Hannah and Kieron Mullens*

The following are 32 page colour titles unless stated

ON SALE FROM

AUGUST 3

Dark Horse

one-shot **Cannon God Exaxxion: Stage 4** (Kenichi Sonoda; tpb) The invaders didn't make it halfway across the galaxy without some pretty impressive gear, and that includes a major league mega-robot that incapacitates Exaxxion, forcing Hoichi to take on the Riofaldian hordes solo in a last-ditch effort to free Exaxxion, humanity's last chance to prevail against extraterrestrial tyranny! 208pg b&w $15.95

new **Emily the Strange** 1 *(The Boring Issue;* Cosmic Debris) Welcome to Emily's dark world – a place where kitty friends talk, where the ghosts of famous weirdos come out to play, and where anyone who's ever been considered a little strange themselves will be made to feel at home. 48pg $7.95

Serenity 2 (Joss Whedon + Brett Matthews & Will Conrad + Laura Martin) On the run and out of cash, the ragtag crew of Serenity take on a scavenger mission with the hopes of earning enough dough to disappear for a while... $2.99

Star Wars: Empire 36 *(The Wrong Side of the War* 1 of 5; Welles Hartley & Davide Fabbri + Christian Dalla Vecchia) Devotion to duty has put Imperial Lieutenant Janek Sunber once more on the front lines. First as part of an intense ground battle, where the last of a planet's freedom fighters are desperately holding on, then as a glorified prison guard at an Imperial base where prisoners are put to work for the benefit of the Empire. $2.99

Trigun Maximum Vol 6 *(The Gunslinger;* Yasuhiro Nightow; tpb) A lot of the Gung-Ho Guns have fallen victim to defeat and therefore death, but not by the bullets of the reluctant hero, Vash the Stampede. But even if the Guns seem to be dwindling, that doesn't mean there's a lack of violent freaks tearing up the planet. 192pg b&w, ... $9.95

DC Comics

Aquaman 33 (John Arcudi & Patrick Gleason + Christian Alamy) Black Manta shows up in Sub Diego, but he's not looking for a fight. Not yet, anyway! Tempest, on the other hand, seems to be just itching for one – with Aquaman. $2.50

Blood of the Demon 6 (John Byrne + Will Pfeifer & Byrne + Nekros) Superman, Batman and Wonder Woman attempt to track down Jason Blood, who is dedicated to ensuring that Etrigan can never be freed again. $2.50

one-shot **DC's Greatest Imaginary Stories** (various; tpb) Collects some of the best imaginary stories featuring Superman, Supergirl, Batman, and the Flash from 1946-1967! 192pg .. $19.99

DC Special: The Return of Donna Troy 3 (Phil Jimenez & José Luis García-López + George Pérez) The Teen Titans and the Outsiders fight for the soul of long-lost comrade Donna Troy in a battle that literally drives to the core of an endangered planet – and reveals a shocking secret! $2.99

Detective Comics 809 *(War Crimes* 1 of 4; Andersen Gabrych & various) The truth about *War Games* is revealed! Now one of Batman's former supporters is out to tear him apart! 40pg $2.99

Firestorm 16 *(Secret Origins* 2 of 2; Stuart Moore & Jamal Igle + Rob Stull) Firestorm merges with an unexpected partner in a desperate attempt to defeat the Pionic Man. $2.50

Gotham Central 34 (Greg Rucka + Ed Brubaker & Kano + Stefano Gaudiano) The cops have what appears to be Robin's dead body in the Gotham Morgue. And with an uncooperative Batman in Gotham City, the only people to turn to for answers may be the Teen Titans! $2.50

The Intimates 10 (Joe Casey & Scott Iwahashi & Sandra Hope) What better way to celebrate one last blast of summer than a trip to the infamous Devonshire factory? But what secrets are in store for teenagers playing superhero? ... $2.99

JSA 76 (Geoff Johns & David Lopez + Fernando Blanco) In the aftermath of the devastating *Black Vengeance* story, the JSA must regroup and reassess their purpose – but Hawkman harbours a secret that will change the JSA's role in the DCU forever! $2.50

Justice League Unlimited 12 (Adam Beechen & Carlo Barberi + Walden Wong) When Mirror Master traps the Flash and sets his sights on the rest of the Justice League, it's up to Jay Garrick – the original Flash – to save the day! $2.25

Looney Tunes 129 (various) Court jesters Bugs and Daffy must compete for laughs at sword-point! Meanwhile, for all his power, Stupor-Duck finds himself helpless against his fiendish Editor! $2.25

MAD 457 (The Usual Gang of Idiots) It's summertime, and the livin's easy - and even easier with this issue of MAD to fan yourself with. 48pg $3.99

Matador 4 (Devin Grayson & Brian Stelfreeze) Isabel's life-and-death struggle becomes a massacre as forces conspire to wipe out all evidence of the thwarted attempt on her life. $2.99

one-shot **The Sandman Presents: Thessaly – Witch For Hire** (Bill Willingham & Shawn McManus; tpb) *See Close-Up, below.*

Son of Vulcan 3 (of 6; Scott Beatty & Keron Grant) As the superhero community reacts to the news of another champion lost, Vulcan's killer is revealed! $2.99

Superman 220 (Mark Verheiden & Tony Daniel + Marlo Alquiza) Superman and Superboy find their way to the ruins of the old Fortress of Solitude in the Arctic with John Henry Irons to check on the missing Eradicator. $2.50

Superman: The Man of Steel Vol 4 (various) The fourth collection featuring Superman tales from the 1980s, featuring Superman #7-8, Adventures of Superman #430-431, Action Comics #590, #591, and Legion of Super-Heroes #37-38. 192pg $19.99

Swamp Thing 18 *(Healing the Breach* 4 of 4; Joshua Dysart & Enrique Breccia) Swamp Thing, imprisoned by the eco-sorcerers, confronts the Seed Gatherer, a deranged transdimensional CEO who believes he's channelling the spirit of Johnny Appleseed. Mature readers. ... $2.99

Swan Vol 4 (Ariyoshi Kyoko) Masumi meets yet another talented rival, Sidney Eglund, who is determined to prove herself the better dancer. 200pg b&w $9.99

new **Testarotho** Vol 1 (Sanbe Kei) In a dark future, rival warriors of warring sects persecute non believers and die for their faith. But a disillusioned young novice and a deadly gun-toting priest may be about to change all that. Mature readers. 168pg b&w $9.99

new **Wildsiderz** 1 (J. Scott Campbell) Five young friends tap into a radical new technology that transforms and empowers them with animalistic abilities! But just what will ordinary teenagers do when they take on extraordinary alter-egos? Will they abuse their new-found powers to climb the high school hierarchy or hone their skills to become the next generation of heroes? Variant cover. $3.50

Y: The Last Man 36 (Brian K. Vaughan & Pia Guerra + José Marzan Jr) Series co-creator Pia Guerra returns for a special stand-alone issue that finally reveals the whole story behind Yorick Brown's long-lost true love, Beth Deville. Mature readers. $2.99

close-up

The Sandman Presents: Thessaly – Witch For Hire

DC Comics

Writer: Bill Willingham

Artist: Shawn McManus

The world's oldest and most powerful witch returns in this collection written by Bill Willingham (Fables). This tale follows Thessaly as she becomes the unwitting partner in a monster-killing business with her ghostly one-time nemesis, Fetch. Mature readers. 96pg $12.99

ON SALE AUGUST 3

Marvel

Amazing Fantasy 11 *(The New Pollution* 5 of 6; Fred Van Lente + Jeff Parker & Leonard Kirk + Federica Manfredi) She's been marked for death by S.H.I.E.L.D., her cover has nearly been blown by AIM, and she's said goodbye to the one guy she really liked. Is all-new Scorpion out for the count? $2.99

one-shot **Avengers: Vision and the Scarlet Witch** (Steve Englehart + Bill Mantlo & Don Heck + Rick Leonardi) The remnants of their relationship are in ruins, but how did it begin? See how a match made in heaven started with a wedding in Limbo, and Halloween horror proves that the magic stayed in this marriage! Collects Giant-Size Avengers #4 and Vision and the Scarlet Witch #1-4. 128pg $15.99

one-shot **Fantastic Four: Foes** (Robert Kirkman & Cliff Rathburn; tpb) After years of continued defeat at the hands of the FF, why would a person still attempt something he has learned to be impossible? Collects Fantastic Four: Foes #1-6. 144pg $16.99

Fantastic Four: House of M 2 (of 3; John Layman & Scot Eaton) Victor Von Doom has everything he could possibly want...love, power, and the position formerly occupied by his dead rival, Reed Richards. But would he be willing to throw all these things away just for a chance at the only thing he really wants- the throne of the House of M? ... $2.99

Giant-Size X-Men 4 (Chris Claremont & Paul Smith) In celebration of super-scribe Chris Claremont's 30th anniversary chronicling the adventures of Marvel's Merry Mutants comes this collection of tales – plus a brand-new eight-page story by Claremont and Paul Smith. 96pg $4.99

Iron Man: House of M 2 (of 3; Greg Pak & Pat Lee) In a world run by mutants, brilliant Sapien Tony Stark stands out as one of the few success stories – but is Tony willing to betray his own species to defend that success? $2.99

new **Marvel 1602: New World** 1 (of 6; Greg Pak & Greg Tocchini) When Captain America was thrust back in time, it changed reality as we know it. Dinosaurs still roam the earth and the Marvel superheroes we know came to exist 500 years early. $3.50

Marvel Adventures: Spider-Man 6 (Sean McKeever & Patrick Scherberger) It's like a dream come true when Spider-Man is offered a big sack of cash by a wealthy socialite. But to get his webbed mitts on the green, he's gotta take on the Sandman! Maybe Aunt May's bills can wait another month. $2.50

one-shot **Marvel Adventures Spider-Man** Vol 1 *(The Sinister Six Digest;* Kitty Fross & Erica David + Patrick Scherberger) What separates the supervillains from just plain old villains? When they escape from prison, normal villains might lay low for a while and enjoy the sweetness of freedom. But not a supervillain like Doctor Octopus. 96pg $6.99

Marvel Team-Up 11 *(Titannus War* 1 of 3; Robert Kirkman & Paco Medina) When Titannus conquers Japan, can even an assemblage of Earth's greatest heroes be enough to withstand his might? And what are Titannus' plans anyway? $2.99

Ororo: Before The Storm 3 (of 4; Marc Sumerak & Carlo Barberi) Ororo and her fellow street urchins have made their way to the very heart of an ancient Egyptian temple in search of a priceless artefact, only to find themselves up

against a foe more powerful than they could have ever imagined! $2.99

new **Runaways** Vol 1 (Brian K Vaughan & Adrian Alphona + Takeshi Miyazawa; hb) Collects all 18 issues of the Runaways' first series. Six young friends discover their parents are all secretly super-powered villains! Finding strength in one another, the shocked teens run away from home and straight into the adventure of their lives – vowing to turn the tables on their evil legacy. 448pg $34.99

Shanna, The She-Devil 7 (of 7; Frank Cho) Up to her in raptors that want to make her their main course, Shanna must make a fatal gamble. Mature readers. $3.50

Spider-Girl 89 (Tom Defalco & Ron Frenz) Hot on the heels of her adventures in Last Hero Standing, Spider-Girl learns that one of her friends in Midtown High has suffered a tragedy and she must now prevent Moose from making the biggest mistake of his life! $2.99

Ultimate Spider-Man 81 *(Warriors* 3 of 7; Brian Michael Bendis & Mark Bagley) The Kingpin-wannabe called Hammerhead makes Chinatown a battlefield in his quest to become the mob's top man. $2.50

Uncanny X-Men 463 *(Season of the Witch* 2 of 4; Chris Claremont & Alan Davis) It's déjà vu all over again! Captain Britain, Meggan, Psylocke and Marvel Girl find themselves in England, racing against time to save the universe from complete and utter annihilation! . $2.50

X-Men Unlimited 10 (Joe Meno & Paco Medina + Jose Homs Higon) The sudden resignation of the Xavier Institute's guidance counsellor forces the Beast to step in to fill her much larger than expected shoes, and the poor mutant doesn't know what he's in store for. $2.99

X-Men Vignettes Vol 2 (Chris Claremont & John Bolton; tpb) From the frozen Canadian wilderness to the Shi'ar Galaxy, witness behind-the-scenes tales from an earlier X-Men era! Collects the backups stories from Classic X-Men #14-25. 152pg $17.99

ON SALE FROM

AUGUST 10

Dark Horse

Blade of the Immortal 104 (Hiroaki Samura) Rin is reunited with an old ally, two compelling, new Ittō-ryū warriors are introduced, and Manji finds himself in the lion's den of Habaki Kagamura, leader of the Mugai-ryū. b&w ... $2.99

one-shot **Japan** (Buronson & Kentaro Miura; tpb) A terrible earthquake hits, and Katsuji, his brother, and Yuka, along with four high-schoolers in Spain on a field trip, all fall deep underground. While trapped below the surface, they encounter a mysterious old woman who reveals to them prophecies that the wealthy nation of Japan will meet the same demise as the once-prosperous city of Carthage. 216pg b&w ... $12.95

one-shot **Little Lulu: Lulu in the Doghouse** (John Stanley & Stanley + Irving Tripp; tpb) Beginning a sequence of volumes collecting every Little Lulu comicbook story from the original, long-running Dell Comics series. 208pg b&w $9.95

Samurai Executioner Vol 7 (Kazuo Koike & Goseki Kojima; tpb) Learning about Kubikiri Asa, the Shōgun's decapitator, and his stoic life. This man's joyless existence is backed by stories of his past as a child, and how they reflect on his present life. 304pg b&w .. $9.95

DC Comics

100 Bullets 63 (Brian Azzarello & Eduardo Risso) Allegiances in this world are like shifting sand, and when one particularly sexy member of The Trust tries to draw a line in it, she'll learn that Agent Graves doesn't just cross a line – he obliterates it. Mature readers. $2.75

Action Comics 830 (Gail Simone & John Byrne + Nelson) The Society comes to Metropolis to offer the city protection – over Superman's dead body! $2.50

one-shot **Adam Strange: Planet Heist** (Andy Diggle & Pascal Ferry; tpb) Collects the 8-issue mini-series. Heroic adventurer Adam Strange was ready to abandon Earth and join his wife and daughter on his adopted homeworld of Rann forever, but the newly perfected Zeta-Beam that was to transport him there never came. Now he's trapped on Earth. 192pg $19.99

Batman 643 *(War Crimes* 2 of 4; Bill Willingham & Giuseppe Camuncoli + Sandra Hope) A long-lost nemesis of the Bat returns to exact revenge for a painful personal loss while someone poses as Batman in a public place! $2.50

Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight 194 *(Snow* 3 of 5; J.H. Williams III + Dan Curtis Johnson & Seth Fisher) Batman's surveillance team discovers the secret a corporation has kept that has transformed an ordinary research scientist into a mad menace to himself and all of Gotham. $2.50

Breach 8 (Bob Harras & Marcos Martin + Alvaro Lopez) The battle between Breach and Talia's Kobra draws the attention of Superman, who only wants to help, but Breach remembers their last encounter and the lives that were lost as a result. $2.50

Fables 40 (Bill Willingham & Mark Buckingham & Steve Leialoha) The action picks up as we follow Boy Blue in his quest across the Homelands, learn how close he came to rescuing Red Riding Hood, and discover how the Adversary came to power. Mature readers. $2.75

Green Arrow 53 *(Heading into the Light* 2 of 4; Judd Winick & Tom Fowler + Rodney Ramos) Green Arrow and Black Lightning face off against the malevolent Mirror Master! But even as they contend with one of the Flash's most fearsome foes, our heroes are left to wonder if someone much scarier is behind the latest Star City scourge. $2.50

Hawkman 43 (Justin Gray + Jimmy Palmiotti & Joe Bennett + Kevin Sharpe) The secret history of the Golden Eagle is revealed! $2.50

JLA 117 *(Crisis of Conscience* 3 of 5; Geoff Johns + Allan Heinberg & Chris Batista + Mark Farmer) Batman has left the JLA, to fight! The Secret Society of Super-Villains knows all of the secrets of the JLA, and their first target is Superman's wife, Lois Lane! But after a fierce battle, will the heroes decide to mind-wipe the villains once again? $2.50

Majestic 8 (Dan Abnett + Andy Lanning & Neil Googe + Trevor Scott) Having been bounced around through space and time, Majestic is finally back in the present-day WSU! But can he stop the future from happening? $2.99

Mnemovore 5 (of 6; Hans Rodionoff & Ray Fawkes + Mike Huddleston) Kaley, Ethan and Mike all close in on the lair of the mnemovore, facing the utter collapse of reason and memory amid dozens of lifeless bodies. Mature readers. $2.99

Musashi 9 Vol 4 (Takahashi Miyuki) When stolen launch codes of American ICBMs accidentally fall into the hands of a Japanese high school student, Musashi #9 goes into action alone! 208pg b&w $9.99

Nightwing 111 (Devin Grayson & Cliff Chiang + Ande Parks) Dick Grayson's gone undercover – maybe too far undercover! When the criminals whose trust he's earned stab him in the back, the parts of his life that have been under wraps come to the surface. $2.50

Outsiders 27 (Peter Tomasi & Will Conrad + Sean Parsons) Batman and The Outsiders are together again as the sins of the past blast back, forcing the team into a confrontation with a deadly terror that is not what it seems. . $2.50

Rann-Thanagar War 4 (of 6; Dave Gibbons & Ivan Reis + Marc Campos) As the greatest warriors in the universe battle, one of Thanagar's greatest enemies stands revealed with conquest on his mind. $2.50

Scooby-Doo 99 (various) The Mystery Inc. gang has found a legendary sunken treasure! But disturbing this ancient civilisation's goods awakens its ancient uncivilised guardian! $2.25

new **Supergirl** 1 (Jeph Loeb & Ian Churchill + Norm Rapmund) Kara's story begins with the same brand of high-flying adventure as she begins her whirlwind tour of the DCU! And the first hero she squares off against is Power Girl! $2.99

Terra Obscura Vol 2 (Alan Moore & various; *America's Best Comics;* tpb) Thirty years have passed for Tom Strong and the heroes of Terra Obscura – do they have what it takes to stop a mysterious object on a collision course for their planet? 144pg $14.99

Tom Strong 34 (Steve Moore & Paul Gulacy + Jimmy Palmiotti; *ABC)* Tom lends a hand after a nuclear detonation in central Asia but discovers a spired city in which unusual dangers abound, as well as a lovely adventuress. $2.99

Villains United 4 (of 6; Gail Simone & Dale Eaglesham + Wade von Grawbadger) The renegade Six – the criminals who have refused to join the ever-increasing ranks of the villainous Society – are given an unlikely and potentially deadly mission: to rescue one of the DCU's most powerful heroes! $2.50

new **The Winter Men** #1 (of 8; Brett Lewis & John Paul Leon) What became of the USSR's super-soldiers after the Soviet Union collapsed? Kris Kalenov is a war hero turned mobbed-up rent-a-cop who spends his days drinking and taking bribes in the New Russia. Mature readers. $2.99

World's Finest Archives Vol 3 (various; hb) Silver Age material from World's Finest #102-116 by two of the artists most associated with Batman and Superman! 224pg $49.99

Marvel

Captain America 9 (Ed Brubaker & Steve Epting) In the wake of disaster, Cap begins his hunt for the enemy that has dogged his steps, who has taken more from him than anyone ever has! $2.99

Daredevil Vol 4 (Brian Michael Bendis & Alex Maleev; hb) Collects Daredevil Vol 9: King of Hell's Kitchen and Daredevil Vol 10: The Widow. The Yakuza have come to stake their claim to Hell's Kitchen, targeting Matt Murdock. 280pg $29.99

Essential Daredevil Vol 3 (various; tpb) DD goes Hollywood with the Stuntmaster and Brother Brimstone, but is any star as big as the Stilt-Man? Collects Daredevil #49-74 and Iron Man #35-36. 584pg $16.99

Exiles 68 *(Destroy All Monsters* 3 of 3;

Illuminations

Highlights from August's releases

Selected by Martin "Biff" Averre

Generally I am not a lover of miniseries, so few have any real relevance to me, preferring as I do to become involved with characters and situations on an on-going basis. Dark Horse has an exception to my rule, **B.P.R.D The Black Flame**. Although a six-issue mini, this is part of a larger on-going story; the Bureau for Paranormal Research and Development. Each new miniseries explores the Bureau and the weird and wonderful with Mike Mignola scripts which so far have delivered every time. If you haven't tried this series before I highly recommend it, and if your local store doesn't stock it then make them.

Sales 3/5 (let's get this up to 5) Quality 5/5

As far as new series, even those hated miniseries, DC is cooking with gas at the moment. I literally have customers queuing up for all the new DC releases, plus talking animatedly about them. When a company gets it that right then it needs to be told. Well done, DC. This month sees the release of **Supergirl** #0 and #1 written by Jeph Loeb with art by Ian Churchill. Kara Zor-el was introduced in **Superman/Batman** #8-13, also written by Jeph, and the launch of the series sees her square off against Power Girl. Couple this with two covers – from Michael Turner and Ian Churchill – and DC has another smash hit. **Sales 5/5 Quality 5/5**

Vying to beat the sales on **Supergirl** will be **Justice** #1 (of 12). Yes, most miniseries we can live without, but this is an Alex Ross-led re-imagining of the Justice League of America. **Sales 5/5 Quality 5/5**

I'm staying with DC for just a while longer because the ever-prolific Warren Ellis has another new ongoing series, **Jack Cross**. Drawn by that Scottish stalwart Gary Erskine, this tale of a one-man solution to direct threats to America's freedoms is the sort of story that Warren excels at. Jack works for hire, but not for money, and once on the case he will stop at nothing to get it done. This I feel sure will appeal more to the British market than the US, and will for us be a strong seller. **Sales 4/5 Quality 5/5**

Image central as always has a lot of new miniseries and one-shots, all of which should sell better, but for some reason do not strike a cord with the British buying public, except from Top Cow. The **Necromancer** #1 looks like having everything that the public wants: female teenager, a talent for sorcery, the excellent art of Francis Manapul, mages and Dark Age demons and a good script by Joshua Ortega. Retailers should not overlook this one, I think I smell a sleeper hit here.

Sales 5/5 Quality 5/5

About three years ago Marvel's Joe Quesada decided to stop annuals as they were often of low quality and it would be better to have 14 issues a year instead, in some cases more. This has proved to be a great decision, with all the titles with the extra issues selling well without any drop in any particular title. My question to Joe now is why four **Ultimate Annuals**? The stories sound good and the **Ultimate Spider-Man** and **Ultimate Fantastic Four** annuals are set to have ramifications in the ongoing regular Ultimate titles. But all annuals sell less than the regular series, so once again, Joe, why? Is it to hide the less than auspicious toy tie launch, **Mega Morphs** #1 (of 4)? The rest of Marvel output of any note is House of M or House Of M related so nothing else to shout about, except: Why the annuals? **Sales 2/5 Quality 5/5**

With 24 years of comic retail experience as Ace Comics, Biff has also produced his ***Illuminations*** *monthly fanzine for 19 years before moving it to the web.*

Tony Bedard & Jim Calafiore) Tragedy once again befalls the Exiles! While most of the team is on a world of giant monsters, a deadly threat stalks the crystal corridors of their trans-temporal headquarters. $2.99

Gravity 3 (of 5; Sean Mckeever & Mike Norton) Greg's chance to prove to the superhero community he has what it takes to be one of them. But has he bitten off more than he can chew? $2.99

House of M 5 (of 8; Brian Michael Bendis & Olivier Coipel) The Marvel Universe has been rocked to its very core and more and more rebels join to rise up against what has happened. But can Spider-Man handle the truth about his life as it is and his life as it was? $2.99

one-shot **Hulk: Tempest Fugit** (Peter David & Lee Weeks + Jae Lee; tpb) As a long-buried episode from Bruce Banner's youth begins to surface with possible ramifications for the future, the Hulk finds himself washed up on a strange island, populated by several hapless victims and some most unexpected monsters. Collects Incredible Hulk #77-82. 144pg $14.99

Incredible Hulk 85 (Peter David & Jorge Lucas) Down Under has now become the destination for downtrodden humans hoping to escape the second-class citizenship of the outside world. $2.99

Marvel Nemesis: The Imperfects 4 (of 6; Greg Pak & Renato Arlem) With the help of Iron Man, Daredevil and Wolverine get closer to discovering who was behind the mysterious abductions just as Dr Niles Van Roekel's new savage army of superpowered beings is ready to test their limits against some of Marvel's greatest heroes! $2.99

new **Mega Morphs** 1 (of 4; Sean Mckeever & Lou Kang) Some dangers are too big for even the Marvel Super Heroes – and that's when they activate Tony Stark's newest inventions: the Mega Morphs! $2.99

New Thunderbolts 11 (Fabian Nicieza & Tom Grummett) Something is desperately wrong with the House of M and only Private Genis-Vell, a member of the Titan/Kree Exploratory Council, can see it. Why does he keep having visions of people who wanted to hurt him? $2.99

New Warriors 3 (of 6; Zeb Wells & Skottie Young) On a lonely country road the New Warriors face what might be their greatest challenge yet: a flat tire. $2.99

Punisher 24 *(Up is Down and Black is White* 6 of 6; Garth Ennis & Leo Fernandez; *Max Comics)* Frank Castle's having a rough day: After taking two blasts to the chest from a sawed-off 12-gauge – courtesy of Nick Cavella's lethal and not-so-lovely goon Teresa – he falls into the clutches of Agent O'Brien, a renegade spook who carries a major torch for the Punisher. Is love in the air? Mature readers. $2.99

Powers 14 (Brian Michael Bendis & Michael Avon Oeming) Has one of the cosmic galactic guardians of the planet earth been murdered? Do we even have a cosmic guardian of the planet earth? Mature readers. $2.95

Spider-Man: Breakout 5 (of 5; Tony Bedard & Manuel Garcia) With the fate of four hundred defenceless families on the line, Spider-Man's got a web full of trouble! $2.99

Toxin 5 (of 6; Peter Milligan & Darick Robertson) After turning Pat's life upside down, the alien symbiote Toxin is ready to give a little something back to its host body. $2.99

Ultimate Fantastic Four 22 *(Crossover* 2 of 3; Mark Millar & Greg Land) The story you never thought you'd see finds the fledgling F.F. on an alternate Earth pursued by the last people they'd expect! $2.50

one-shot **Ultimates Annual** 1 *(The Reserves;* Mark Millar & Steve Dillon) If you thought The Ultimates were the only team S.H.I.E.L.D. was creating, you were wrong! Get ready for the next wave of super-soldiers designed to protect America's vital interests. Mature readers. 48pg $3.99

Uncanny X-Men – The New Age Vol 3: *(On Ice;* Chris Claremont & Alan Davis; tpb) The X-Men discover a wondrous and advanced new civilisation when they return to the isolated, Antarctic jungle – but it's none too friendly toward humans – or mutants! Collects Uncanny X-Men #455-461. 168pg $15.99

X-Men 174 *(Bizarre Love Triangle* 4 of 4; Peter Milligan & Salvador Larroca) A figure from the X-Men's past has returned to the mansion seeking sanctuary within the walls of Xavier's home. The guest, however, isn't getting the warmest welcome. $2.50

Young Avengers 7 *(Secret Identities* 1 of 2; Allan Heinberg & Andrea Divito) The newly reconfigured Young Avengers prepare to make their public debut, but first they have to face a threat more powerful than Kang the Conqueror, more dangerous than Mr Hyde, and more cunning than the Masters of Evil: their parents. $2.99

ON SALE FROM

AUGUST 17

Dark Horse

one-shot **Little and Large** (Tony Millionaire; hb) When Ann Louise's grandfather crashes through the woods to cut down a tree for use in his workshop, he never stops to think about all the creatures making their home in it. Uncle Gabby then meets a spider displaced from his tree house and begins a quest to find him a new place to live. 40pg $7.95

Man with the Screaming Brain 4 (Bruce Campbell + David Goodman & Rick Remender + Hilary Barta) Dual-brained Campbell goes toe-to-toe with a bar full of Russian ruffians at the beck and call of a Gypsy beauty who's trying her darnedest to plant him in an early grave. $2.99

Vampire Hunter D: Raiser Of Gales Vol 2 (Hideyuki & Yoshitaka Amano; novel) Ten years ago four children disappeared while playing near a castle, only to mysteriously reappear a month later. Now vampires have begun to hunt in the daylight. Are the two events connected? 300pg b&w, ... $8.95

DC Comics

Adventures of Superman 643 (Greg Rucka & Karl Kerschl) Superman, Batman and Wonder Woman reach a turning point in their relationship. Where do they go from here? $2.50

The Authority: Revolution 11 (of 12; Ed Brubaker & Dustin Nguyen + Richard Friend) The tables are turned on the Authority as Bendix releases his secret weapon! Mature readers. $2.99

Batgirl 67 (Andersen Gabrych & Alé Garza + Jesse Delperdang) On a quest to learn the identity of her mother, Cassandra Cain must travel to the Aegean Sea to find the elusive Lady Shiva. $2.50

new **Batman: Journey Into Knight** 1 (of 12; Andrew Helfer & Tan Eng Huat) Batman attempts to save a young girl from being robbed, only to learn that the young girl isn't so innocent after all. This incident leads an undercover Bruce Wayne from Gotham City's club scene to an airliner filled with the bodies of the freshly dead! ... $2.50

The Batman Strikes! 12 (Bill Matheny & Christopher Jones + Terry Beatty) The scientist who created Bane has been arrested by the Gotham City Police. But when Bane wants payback on the man who made him a monster, it'll take Batman and the police to stop him! $2.25

Birds of Prey 85 (Gail Simone & Joe Bennett + Jack Jadson) Oracle risks everything to fight the Brainiac virus on her own! Plus, Canary begs Huntress to rejoin the team. The future of the Birds hangs in the balance in this issue. $2.50

The Books of Magick: Life During Wartime 13 *(Losing my Religion* 1 of 3; Si Spencer + Neil Gaiman & Dean Ormston) In the aftermath of the magical war, Tim Hunter must take apart the strange new world he created, because leaving dimensions open can be dangerous. Mature readers. $2.75

Detective Comics 810 *(War Crimes* 3 of 4; Andersen Gabrych & various) It's an old-fashioned throw-down when Batman and the Joker lock horns! 40pg $2.99

Ex Machina 14 *(Fact vs Fiction* 3 of 3; Brian K. Vaughan & Tony Harris + Tom Feister) While Mayor Mitchell Hundred risks his life to end a dangerous situation inside a New York courthouse, his confidants finally confront the creator of a mysterious new super-hero known as the Automaton. Mature readers. $2.99

The Human Race 6 (Ben Raab & Justiniano + Walden Wong) Nymph struggles with the woman she thinks is her beloved's ex-girlfriend. Ulysses struggles with trying to remain human despite his extra-human gifts. ... $2.99

one-shot **JSA: Lost** (Geoff Johns & various; tpb) A new collection including JSA # 59-67. The JSA visit old friends and new as they rectify injustices, aware that as they fix one problem, an even larger one is brewing in the timestream! 208pg $19.99

new **Justice** 1 (Jim Krueger + Alex Ross & Doug Braithwaite + Ross) The members of the fabled Justice League of America are about to learn they aren't the only ones who can band together toward a common goal. 40pg $2.99

Lucifer 65 *(Morningstar* 3 of 6; Mike Carey & Peter Gross + Ryan Kelly) Lucifer confronts the forces of the Lilim on the fields of Armageddon, with all the big guns on the other side. Mature readers. $2.75

Manhunter 13 (Marc Andreyko & Javier Pina + Fernando Blanco) This issue of Manhunter ties into The OMAC Project as Kate Spencer and Cameron Chase are on the run from Brother Eye! Can Project Manhunter's secrets be unravelled before it's too late? .. $2.50

The Maxx Book Five (Sam Kieth; tpb) Julie and Ii'l Sarah encounter a slew of new characters, but can both of them survive the experience? Collects #28-36. Mature readers. 192pg $19.99

The Powerpuff Girls 65 (various) Meet the Micros! Mysterious miniature versions of the Girls have come to Townsville. Will they be the Powerpuffs' new best friends? $2.25

Seven Soldiers: Klarion the Witch-Boy 3 (of 4; Grant Morrison & Frazer Irving) Klarion has escaped his underground home in Limbo Town and found himself on the streets of New York City. Can the Witch-Boy avoid the clutches of the evil Mister Melmoth and the Deviant Ones, or will he welcome them? $2.99

Swamp Thing Vol. 2 *(Love In Vain;* Joshua Dysart & Enrique Breccia) Reprinting issues #9-14, featuring the first two story arcs, *Love in Vain* and *A Measure of Faith.* Mature readers. 144pg $14.99

Tenjho Tenge Vol 3 (various) From the first floor of the bowling alley to the roof, the Juken Club wages a desperate battle against the Executive Committee's deadliest members! 208pg b&w $9.99

new **Top 10: Beyond The Farthest Precinct** #1 (of 5; Paul DiFilippo & Jerry Ordway; *ABC)* Find out what's been going on in the lives of Toy Box, Kemlo Caesar, Smax, King Peacock, Joe Pi, and many others – plus meet several new and decidedly unique cops. $2.99

Marvel

Cable/Deadpool 18 (Fabian Nicieza & Patrick Zircher) How can Cable be a baby now? Can Forge revert him to normal? Does Deadpool know how to change nappies? And most troublesome of all, when this whole mess started, wasn't Deadpool planning to kill Cable? $2.99

Daredevil 76 *(The Murdock Papers* 1 of 5; Brian Michael Bendis & Alex Maleev) First they outed Daredevil in the press, then they married him, and made him the Kingpin of Hell's Kitchen. What could they possibly do to top that? $2.99

Defenders 2 (of 5; Marc Dematteis & Keith Giffen + Kevin Maguire) The Hulk is besieged by the Mindless Ones, while Doctor Strange and Prince Namor are utterly defeated by Dormammu. $2.99

Marvel Adventures: Fantastic Four 3 (Jeff Parker & Carlo Pagulayan) A doctor is becoming famous for his seeming ability to cure patients of terrible diseases. Nobody's sure how he does it, but everyone is fascinated by what seems to be a healing touch. $2.50

Marvel Knights 4 #21 *(Desperate Housewife;* Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa & Valentine De Landro) Susan and Reed Richards are among comicdom's happiest, most stable couples. So why, then, does Reed perpetually forget their anniversary? $2.99

one-shot **Marvel Milestones: Captain Britain, Psylocke and Golden Age Sub-Mariner** (various) Brian Braddock, the original Captain Britain, is back in costume in a brand-new story from Spectacular Spider-Man magazine – but can even he help Spider-Man stop a Red Skull on the rampage? 48pg $3.99

one-shot **Marvel Visionaries: Chris Claremont** (various; hb) *See Close-Up, left.*

Mutopia X 2 (of 5; David Hine & Lan Medina) Drama continues as Ismael and his wife, Armena, fight over allowing their daughter, Chamayra, to take part in the Rite of Transcendence, a ritual that unleashes the untapped mutant potential in children! $2.99

New X-Men: Hellions 4 (of 4; Nunzio Defilippis & Christina Weir & Clayton Henry) The kids have made their deal

close-up

Marvel Visionaries: Chris Claremont

Marvel

Writer: Chris Claremont

Artist: various

In celebration of the 30th anniversary of Chris Claremont's first X-Men story, the House of Ideas presents a timeless testament to another Marvel visionary. Collects stories from Daredevil #102; Marvel Premiere #11; Iron Fist #14; Uncanny X-Men #137, Uncanny X-Men #153 andmore. 376pg $29.99

ON SALE AUGUST 17

with the devil, and now they want out! Easier said than done, Hellions. They're not getting out without a fight! $2.99

one-shot **Power Pack Digest** (Marc Sumerak & Gurihiru) Marvel's youngest team of superheroes returns for more awesome action, family fun and Snark-stomping adventures! 96pg $6.99

Spider-Man: House of M 3 (of 5; Mark Waid & Tom Peyer + Salvador Larroca) Peter Parker's worst nightmare has come true! Will the support of his family be enough to get him through his darkest hour? .. $2.99

one-shot **Stormbreaker: The Saga of Beta Ray Bill** (Michael Avon Oeming & Daniel Berman + Andrea Di Vito; tpb) The sole survivor of all that was Asgard, will Beta Ray Bill escape the end of one world only to face his own end in the form of an enemy greater than any he has battled before? Collects Stormbreaker: The Sage of Beta Ray Bill #1-6. 144pg $16.99

one-shot **Ultimate Spider-Man Annual** 1 *(More Than You Bargained For;* Brian Michael Bendis & Mark Brooks) Spidey goes toe-to-toe with some old foes – and winds up with a new girlfriend! Who is she? Let's just say she has a familiar face. 48pg $3.99

Ultimate X-Men 62 *(Magnetic North* 2 of 5; Brian K. Vaughan & Stuart Immonen) The master of magnetism is proving to be just as deadly and manipulative within his cell as he was while a free man. And now Magneto has set his sights on the young mutant Alex Summers – the effect on the team of X-Men will be devastating. $2.50

Weapon X: Days of Future Now 2 (of 5; Frank Tieri & Bart Sears) In this issue, a whole bucketload of X-Men die! The Director's mad pursuit of power continues and no one is going to stand in his way. $2.99

one-shot **Wolverine: Soultaker** (Akira Yoshida & Shin Nagasawa; tpb) Wolverine returns to Japan only to get caught in the middle of an ancient war between gods and demons! Can Logan tip the balance for good – and save his soul, Japan and the world? Collects Wolverine: Soultaker #1-5. 120pg $13.99

X-Men: Kitty Pryde – Shadow & Flame 3 (of 6; Akira Yoshida & Paul Smith) Kitty's past comes back to haunt her as mysterious ninja try to kidnap Lockheed. The chase leads her to places she never expected to find herself... and places where her phasing abilities are rendered useless. $2.99

ON SALE FROM

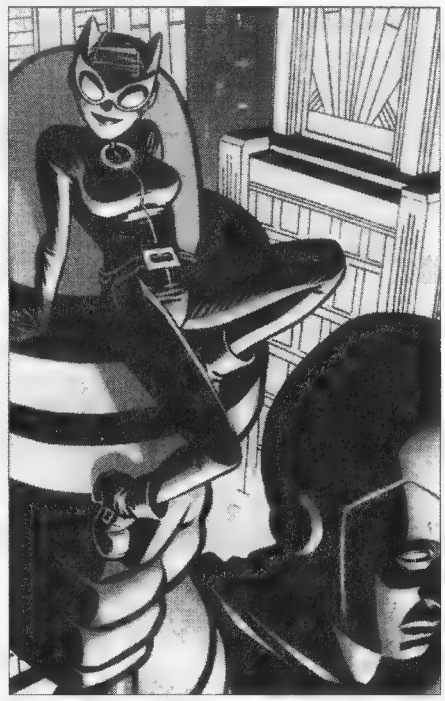
AUGUST 24

Dark Horse

new **Aeon Flux** 1 (Mike Kennedy & Timothy Green II) Life in Bregna is perfect, or as perfect as the government can make the people believe. But not everyone is fooled by their mood-altering propaganda $2.99

one-shot **Babes, Beasts, and Brawn: Sculpture of the Fantastic** (Steve Kiwus; tpb) Babes, Beasts, and Brawn: Sculpture of the Fantastic is a definitive look into the creation of modern day sculptures, with hundreds of colour photographs and insights into the creative process. 144pg $19.95

Conan 19 (Kurt Busiek & Cary Nord + Dave Stewart) Conan unleashes an ancient evil of extraordinary power in this story that sets the stage for the adaptation of one of Robert E. Howard's most-praised Conan stories, *The Tower of the Elephant*, beginning next month. $2.99



close-up

Catwoman: Wild Ride

DC Comics

Writer: Ed Brubaker

Artists: various

A new collection gathering together the episodes of Catwoman #20-24! After the horrifying events in Catwoman: Relentless, Selina and Holly look for relaxation on a road trip – but they're in for way more than they bargained for! Guest-starring Wildcat, Hawkman, Hawkgirl, Captain Cold and more. 128pg $14.99

ON SALE AUGUST 24

DC Comics

Albion 3 (of 6; Alan Moore + Leah Moore & various) If Penny and Danny were familiar with the prison where Grimly Fiendish, the Hurricane and the Steel Claw were kept, they might have been little more prepared for what they discover in Charles Love's nostalgia shop. $2.99

new **The Authority: Revolution Book One** (Ed Brubaker & Dustin Nguyen + Richard Friend) Collects issues #1-6. The Authority has settled into its role as governing body of the US. But with many unhappy Americans and a powerful foe working behind-the-scenes, can a second American Revolution be far behind? Mature readers. 160pg $14.99

Batman: Gotham Knights 68 (A.J. Lieberman & Al Barrionuevo + Bit) While a prisoner of Hush, Alfred discovered that the villain wasn't Tommy Elliot after all – but Alfred suffered partial amnesia, silencing the truth. $2.50

Batman 644 *(War Crimes* 4 of 4; Bill Willingham & Giuseppe Camuncoli + Sandra Hope) Batman faces two of his deadliest enemies: criminal mastermind Black Mask and the maniacal Joker! $2.50

Cartoon Network Block Party 12 (various) The Kids Next Door are all abuzz over the spelling bee – but Queen Bee may just award them the sharp sting of defeat! $2.25

one-shot **Catwoman: Wild Ride** (Ed Brubaker & Cameron Stewart + Guy Davis + Nick Derington) *See Close-Up, above.* $14.99

City of Tomorrow 5 (of 6; Howard Chaykin) Tucker races through the mountains with Ash Wednesday, a robot of dubious reputation. But when Dad's dirty secret is revealed and the US President makes a deal with the Nano-Mafia, will Tucker find out that his new main squeeze is as dirty as the rest of Columbia? $2.99

Day of Vengeance 5 (of 6; Bill Willingham & Justiniano + Walden Wong) Black Alice from Birds of Prey joins the fray! But is her power enough to turn the tide against the Spectre's mad quest to extinguish all magic in the DCU? $2.50

DC Special: The Return of Donna Troy 4 (Phil Jimenez & José Luis García-López + George Pérez) It's the Teen Titans and the Outsiders against the power of the Titans of Myth – and Donna Troy must choose sides for once and for all! $2.99

The Flash 225 *(Rogue War* 6 of 6; Geoff Johns & Howard Porter + Livesay) The fate of the Rogues' plan to control their own destiny – and that of Wally West – comes to a head! $2.50

Gals! Vol 3 (Fujii Mihona) After being turned down by Otohata-kun, Aya's fallen into a self-pitying rut that only Ran can help her get out of. 192pg b&w .. $9.99

Hellblazer 211 *(Down in the Ground Where the Dead Men Go* 5 of 6; Mike Carey & Leonardo Manco) As Nergal's master plan becomes frighteningly clear, John learns the macabre fate of Cheryl's soul. Mature readers. $2.75

new **Jack Cross** 1 (Warren Ellis & Gary Erskine) Jack Cross is a one-man solution to direct threats to America's freedoms. Hired by the enigmatic Karen Huang of the National Security Council, Cross is placed into flashpoint situations with carte blanche to solve problems. $2.50

JSA Classified 2 (Geoff Johns & Amanda Conner + Jimmy Palmiotti) On her way to Metropolis, Power Girl is confronted by three brave heroes from the far future. But the reunion is interrupted before it begins by the menace of Mordru! $2.50

Legion of Super-Heroes 9 (Mark Waid & Art Thibert) Layer upon layer upon layer of intrigue is revealed as the Legion's two factions are pushed to the brink, while Cosmic Boy is faced with a deadly decision that could change the face of his team forever. 40pg ... $2.99

The Omac Project 5 (Greg Rucka & Jesus Saiz) Checkmate rallies against the terrifying power of Brother Eye as the satellite begins to execute an apocalyptic final protocol! $2.50

Otherworld 6 (Phil Jimenez & Andy Lanning) As Siobhan and her allies succumb to the warring factions of Otherworld, Jason and his other companions continue to be seduced by the scientific miracles of this new world – except for Catherine, who's still desperately trying to find her fiancé and discover Jason's role in his disappearance! Mature readers. $2.99

Robin 141 (Bill Willingham & Scott McDaniel + Andy Owens) As Tim prepares to make the biggest decision of his life – whether or not to leave Batman's employ for a Black Ops job in the US government – an old flame comes back into his life. $2.50

Teen Titans 27 (Gail Simone & Rob Liefeld) An old foe of Hawk and Dove returns to create chaos on a cosmic scale! Can the Titans save the day? $2.50

Marvel

Araña 8 (Fiona Avery & Roger Cruz) It's zero hour as Anya comes face to face with the terrifying man she believes to be responsible for her mother's death. $2.99

Araña Vol 2 *(In The Beginning Digest;* Fiona Avery & Roger Cruz) What seems like a routine collar turns out to be anything but when the corrupt judge Anya captured reveals a deadly new threat to the Spider Society. Collects Araña: Heart of the Spider #1-6. 144pg $7.99

Black Panther 7 *(Soul Power In The House Of M;* Reginald Hudlin & Trevor Hairsine) A United Africa – ruled over by Storm and the Black Panther – has become an economic powerhouse and a thorn in Magneto's side. $2.99

Daredevil vs Punisher 3 (of 6; Dave Lapham) As the mob tries to tighten its grip on New York, things begin to heat up for both Daredevil and the Punisher as the deadly assassin know as Bushwacker enters the fray, seeking to claim a $10m bounty on the Punisher's head! Mature. $2.99

one-shot **Earth X** (Alex Ross & Jim Krueger + John Paul Leon; hbk) Explores the depths and heights of the Marvel Universe, from the roots of its humble beginnings to the peak of its ultimate potential. 528pg $49.99

Fantastic Four 530 (J. Michael Straczynski & Mike McKone) It's a reunion with destiny as the Fantastic Four once more brave the hazards of outer space for a rendezvous with a fateful cosmic storm – and the secret that lies therein! $2.99

Hulk: Destruction 2 (of 4; Peter David & Jim Muniz) Bruce Banner is up against the rampaging fury of one of his greatest foes, The Abomination! But what secrets from demented genius Emil Blonsky's terrible transformation threaten to destroy the Incredible Hulk? $2.99

Kabuki: Reflections Book 5 (David Mack) A collection of previously unpublished stories, pages and artwork. Plus a peek inside David Mack's sketchbook, step-by-step commentary by Mack about his painted artwork. 48pg $4.99

Machine Teen 4 (of 5; Marc Sumerak & Mike Hawthorne) Just when it looked like things couldn't possibly get any worse for our high-tech hero, Adam finds himself on the run from an enemy he didn't even know he had. $2.99

Marvel Knights Spider-Man 17 *(Wild Blue Yonder* 5 of 6; Reginald Hudlin & Billy Tan) When Spidey goes toe-to-toe with the mysterious new hero who's taken a major bite out of the Big Apple, he'll wish he didn't. $2.99

Marvel Masterworks: Doctor Strange Vol 2 (various) Contains the climactic battle with the dread Dormammu and the cataclysmic intervention of Eternity and, in his first ever appearance, the Living Tribunal lays his judgment upon the Earth. 304pg $49.99

Mega Morphs 2 (of 4; Sean Mckeever & Lou Kang) Four issues of furious fighting, based on the new line of toys from Toy Biz. $2.99

New Avengers 10 (Brian Michael Bendis & Steve McNiven) The mystery of the Sentry is finally revealed and it affects the entire Marvel superhero community. $2.50

New X-Men 17 *(House Divided* 2 of 4; Christina Weir & Nunzio DeFilippis & Aaron Lopresti) Rumours of the horrors and atrocities taking place in Emperor Sunfire's Japan force the New Mutants to go against their orders and protect the Human Rebellion. $2.99

New X-Men: Academy X Vol 3 *(Exposed;* Nunzio Defilippis + Christina Weir & Michael Ryan + Paco Medina) Three tales. A forbidden relationship comes out into the open, with consequences for everyone at Xavier's! Collects New X-Men: Academy X #12-15. 96pg $10.99

Nightcrawler 9 *(The Winding Way* 3 of 3; Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa & Darick Robertson) Reeling from the tragedy they discovered in Winzeldorf, Nightcrawler, Logan, and Christine race to Florida, to the circus where Kurt was branded a freak many years before, to prevent a similar slaughter. $2.99

Spellbinders 6 (of 6; Mike Carey & Mike Perkins) In the world of the dead, Kim finally comes face-to-face with her true nature and accepts the awesome responsibilities that come with it $2.99

one-shot **Ultimate X-Men Annual** 1 *(Ultimate Sacrifice;* Brian K. Vaughan & Tom Raney) The return of Ultimate Juggernaut! Juggernaut makes a play for the Gem of Cyttorak, the jewel that will make him truly unstoppable. 48pg $3.99

Wolverine 31 *(Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D.* 6 of 6; Mark Millar & John Romita Jr) They turned him into a pawn. They forced him to betray the only people he's ever really trusted. And now, it's time to get even. Everything you've seen up until now has just been a warm

up. Mature readers. $2.50

ON SALE FROM
AUGUST 31

Dark Horse

new **B.P.R.D. The Black Flame** 1 (Mike Mignola +John Arcudi & Guy Davis + Dave Stewart) A bloodbath washes across America as the Bureau for Paranormal Research and Defense turns its attention back to the plague of frogs. $2.99

one-shot **The Incredibles** (Brad Bird & Ricardo Curtis + Ramon Perez) Ostracised by a cynical word, Mr Incredible is forced to resume the life of his secret identity - Bob Parr. But family life and the daily nine-to-five aren't enough for Bob, who takes to sneaking out and doing superhero work in the evenings. 96pg $12.95

one-shot **Kong: King of Skull Island** (Joe DeVito & Brad Strickland; tpb) The son of Carl Denham makes a shocking discovery that leads him back to the site of his father's greatest adventure and to the answers that will unlock the century's greatest mystery and history's greatest miracle. 176pg $19.95

new **Revelations** 1 (Paul Jenkins & Humberto Ramos + Leonardo Olea) From Paul Jenkins and Humberto Ramos, the creative team behind Marvel's Spectacular Spider-Man, comes a sophisticated murder mystery set in the unlikeliest of places – The Vatican. $2.99

one-shot **Shadow Rock** (Jeremy Love & Robert Love + Jeremy Love) After his mother's death, young Timothy London moves from the big city to the small New England fishing town of Shadow Rock to live with his father. His new home is up the hill from a legendary haunted lighthouse where Timothy discovers the ghost of Kendahl Fog, a little boy who died under mysterious circumstances. 80pg $9.95

Star Wars: Republic 80 (John Ostrander & Luke Ross + Jason Keith) Palpatine calls a meeting of his bravest, wisest, and most influential military officers in order to introduce them to his new right-hand man, Darth Vader! $2.99

Super Manga Blast! 55 (various) The last *Club 9* episode; Makoto Kobayashi brings his romantic comedy to an end with a tearjerker finale, set in Haruo Hattori's hometown of rural Akita. 128pg b&w $5.99

Usagi Yojimbo 86 *(The Treasure of the Mother of Mountains* 4; Stan Sakai) Usagi Yojimbo has been captured! The greedy Lord Sanada is operating an illegal gold mine in the Geishu province and has put Usagi and Tomoe Ame to work as his slaves. b&w $2.99

DC Comics

Astro City: The Dark Age 3 (of 16; Kurt Busiek & Brent Anderson) Learn what happened in the late 1950s that set the Williams brothers down their current path and watch the Silver Agent's final fate unfold as the story of dark times for Astro City continues! $2.99

Batman: Jekyll and Hyde 5 (Paul Jenkins & Sean Phillips) Poisoned by Two-Face, a struggling Batman enlists the help of Commissioner Gordon to stop Two-Face from contaminating Gotham City's water supply. $2.99

Catwoman 46 (Will Pfeifer & Pete Woods) Catwoman must deal with the ramifications of making a deal with Hush! Is Selina a villain or hero? $2.50

Doom Patrol 15 (John Byrne & Byrne + Doug Hazlewood) Sun City Central Hospital has a problem – all of the patients are dead! Robotman and Elasti-Girl go to investigate, but what they discover might just suck the life out of them – literally! $2.50

Elfquest: The Grand Quest Vol 10 (Wendy Pini + Richard Pini & Wendy Pini) Collects ElfQuest: Kings of the Broken Wheel #1-4. Blue Mountain has fallen, Winnowill has been exiled, and all seems quiet in the new Holt. 224pg $9.99

Green Lantern 4 (Geoff Johns & Ethan Van Sciver) What does a strange alien autopsy have to do with Hector Hammond? And what part does it play in a dark conspiracy, years in the making, against Green Lantern? $2.99

JLA Classified 11 *(New Maps of Hell* 2 of 6; Warren Ellis & Butch Guice) While Lois Lane investigates a string of suicides at LexCorp, the JLA must contend with several sudden emergencies – all of which begin with an unexplained explosion and end with a mysterious glowing object. $2.99

one-shot **Justice League Elite** Vol 1 (Joe Kelly & various; tpb) An exciting saga dealing with a schism within the ranks of the JLA. Collects Action Comics #775, JLA #100, JLA Secret Files 2004, and Justice League Elite #1-4! 208pg $19.99

The Losers 27 (Andy Diggle & Colin Wilson) His master plan accomplished, Max is now an international threat But before the Losers can get to him, one of their own is captured in a scenario they may be unable to think their way out of. Mature readers. $2.99

Neil Gaiman's Neverwhere 3 (of 10; Mike Carey & Glenn Fabry) With the enthusiastic assassins Croup and Vandemar on her trail, Door returns to her family home and finds her father's dying secret – one that could lead her to her true enemy, who has yet to reveal himself. Mature readers. $2.99

one-shot **Robin Archives** Vol 1 (Bill Finger & various; tpb) Collecting stories from Star-Spangled Comics #65-85 (1947-1948). Twenty-one exciting Golden Age solo adventures of The Boy Wonder 256pg $49.99

Seven Soldiers: Shining Knight 4 (of 4, Grant Morrison & Simone Bianchi) Brought back from the dead and corrupted beyond measure, the Perfect Knight has become a monstrous cannibal in the service of Gloriana, the evil Queen of the invading Sheeda hordes... $2.99

Silent Dragon 2 (of 6; Andy Diggle & Leinil Yu + Gerry Alanguilan) Yakuza strategist Renjiro never expected to come back from the dead. But now that he's been reborn as something less than human – or perhaps more – can he make the ultimate sacrifice that is demanded of him? $2.99

Solo 6 (various) Featuring stories from the Old West, 1950s Las Vegas, a South American prison, a forgotten Texas town, and a Batman/Poison/Ivy tale fresh from the streets of Gotham City! 48pg $4.99

Superman 220 (Mark Verheiden & Tony Daniel + Marlo Alquiza) Superman and Superboy find their way to the ruins of the old Fortress of Solitude in the Arctic with John Henry Irons to check on the missing Eradicator. $2.50

Superman/Batman 22 *(With a Vengeance!* 3 of 6; Jeph Loeb & Ed McGuinness + Dexter Vines) After revealing the mysterious puppet master who has sent the Maximums after Superman and Batman, the World's Finest heroes make a daring escape! $2.99

Teen Titans Go! 22 (J. Torres & Sean Galloway + Khare Randolph) Beast Boy stumbles on an ancient spell book in Raven's room. When his snooping goes too far, how can he get rid of the horrible creature he's unleashed from pages of the book? $2.25

one-shot **Teen Titans/ Outsiders Secret Files 2005** (various) A villain from the Titans' past returns with a plan for revenge on former Titans! 64pg $4.99

one-shot **Tom Strong's Terrific Tales** Book One (Alan Moore & various; *ABC*, tpb) Collects Tom Strong's Terrific Tales #1-6, featuring Strong in spacefaring action, the debut of sexy heroine Jonni Future, and tales of Young Tom Strong. 176pg $17.99

Wonder Woman 220 (Greg Rucka & Rags Morales +Mark Propst) Wonder Woman must face the consequences of her history-making encounter with the Man of Steel. But when Checkmate gets involved, will it be to hurt Diana or help her? $2.50

new **Young Magician** Vol 1 (Narushima Yuri) A battle has broken out among rival sorcerers. The most nefarious group, the Necromancers, is killing young girls in Hong Kong to read the future in their entrails. Mature readers. 240pg b&w $9.99

Marvel

Amazing Spider-Man 523 *(Moving Up* 5 of 6; J Michael Straczynski & Mike Deodato) It's the sensational Spider-Man versus the horrendous hordes of Hydra as the villainous organisation makes its final push to seize control of the country! $2.50

Astonishing X-Men Vol 2 *(Dangerous;* Joss Whedon & John Cassaday; tpb) A tragic death at the Xavier Institute reveals a powerful enemy living among the X-Men that they could never have suspected. Collects Astonishing X-Men #7-12. 144pg $14.99

Captain America 10 (Ed Brubaker & Lee Weeks) What changes await Steve Rogers life now that the House of M is in control? In this new world order, watch the hero known as Captain America moves from the 1940s to the present day, bearing witness to a changing landscape, watching as man becomes the minority, and mutant the ruler. $2.99

Daredevil: Father 2 (Joe Quesada & Quesada + Danny Miki + Richard Isanove) Daredevil has his work cut out for him· New York's crippling heat wave shows no signs of release – and neither does a serial killer with a stranglehold on the city. $2.99

Essential X-Men Vol 6 (various; tpb) Collects Uncanny X-Men #199-213, New Mutants Special Edition #1, X-Men Annual #9, X-Factor #9-11, New Mutants #46, Thor #373-374 and Power Pack #27. 656pg $16.99

House of M 6 (of 8; Brian Michael Bendis & Olivier Coipel) The Marvel Universe has been rocked to its very core and more and more rebels join to rise up against what has happened. But can Spider-Man handle the truth about his life as it is and his life as it was? $2.99

Marvel 1602: New World 2 (of 6; Greg Pak & Greg Tocchini) Witness David Bruce Banner and Peter Parquagh become The Hulk and Spider-Man in the most eagerly-awaited miniseries event of the year! $3.50

NYX 7 (Joe Quesada & Robert Teranishi) Kiden, X-23 and crew take on Zebra Daddy and his gang in the greatest knock down, drag 'em out showdown ever before seen this side Houston. Mature readers. $2.99

one-shot **Official Handbook of the Ultimate Marvel Universe: Spider-Man & The Fantastic Four 2005** (various) Contains in-depth bios on Ultimate Spider-Man and the Ultimate Fantastic Four, and all their friends and foes! 48pg $3.99

Runaways 7 (Brian K. Vaughan & Takeshi Miyazawa) When a dangerous alien invades Los Angeles, the Runaways' own Karolina Dean may be the only hero in the Marvel Universe who can stop him. $2.99

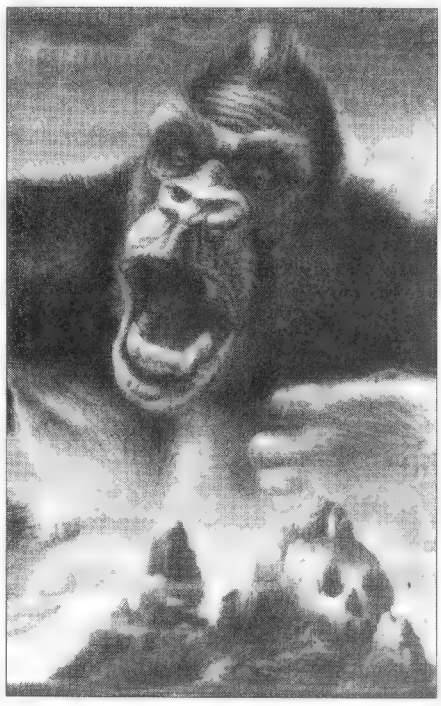
one-shot **Strange: Beginnings and Endings** (J. Michael Straczynski & Sara Barnes + Brandon Peterson; tpb) Brash young surgeon Dr Stephen Strange is on a collision course with destiny – a journey that will force him to search the deepest corners of his own heart and the outer reaches of the cosmos. Collects Strange #1-6. 144pg $17.99

Supreme Power 18 *(Exhibit R: The Statement of Mark Milton;* J. Michael Straczynski & Gary Frank; *Max Comics)* Hyperion's world is turned upside down when his dark secret is exposed to the entire world. But the worst is yet to come. Mature readers. $2.99

one-shot **Ultimate Fantastic Four Annual** 1 *(Enter: The Inhumans;* Mark Millar & Jae Lee) From a hidden race, she came to steal the heart of the FF's youngest member – she's the beautiful elemental called Crystal! 48pg .. $3.99

Ultimates 2 Vol 1 *(Gods and Monsters;* Mark Millar & Bryan Hitch; tpb) It's been one year since they stopped an alien invasion, and now things get hard. New members, new costumes and 12 months of gossip to catch up on! Collects The Ultimates 2 #1-6. 144pg ... $15.99

X-Men: The End – Heroes and Martyrs 6 (of 6; Chris Claremont & Sean Chen) What is behind the long-concealed link between Gambit and Mr Sinister – and what will it mean for Gambit and Rogue's children? .. $2.99



close-up

Kong: King of Skull Island

Dark Horse

Writer: Joe DeVito

Artist: Brad Strickland

In 1933, American showman Carl Denham returned from a mysterious, hidden island with a priceless treasure. The son of Carl Denham makes a shocking discovery that leads him back to the site of his father's greatest adventure and to the answers that will unlock the century's greatest mystery and history's greatest miracle. 176pg $19.95

ON SALE AUGUST 24

RELEASED AND ON SALE IN
AUGUST

Aardvark Vanaheim

Following Cerebus 5 (Craig Miller + John Thorme + Dave Sim) This issue looks at how comic creators have used (or not used) editors to help them with their work. 40pg b&w $3.95

Amaze Ink/ Slave Labor

Bear 9 (Jamie Smart) A raft of embittered rage as Bear goes postal and slaps the vacuous. Satirical vengeance useful for rolling up and coshing people with. 24pg $2.95

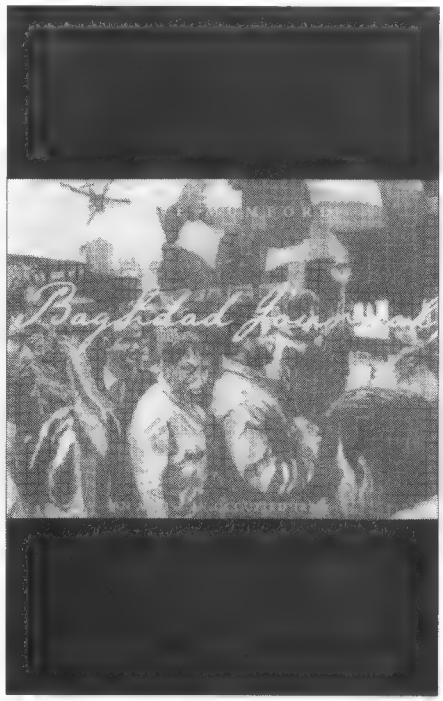
Emo Boy 2 (Steve Emond) Emo Boy attends a concert by his favourite indie-screamo-nerdcore-geek-punk band, Cheezer. While there, he finds time to bond with the coolest girl in his class; take part in a gang fight, get on stage for the ultimate emo-off with Cheezer's lead singer, and pay way too much for a hot dog! 24pg $2.95

new **Little Gloomy's Super Scary Monster Show** 1 (Landry Walker & Eric Jones) Fear the mysterious invasion from the murky depths of space! Dread the impending zombie attack!! Witness the inter-dimensional terror that is Carl Cthulhu's grandmother!!! 24pg $2.95

Little Scrowlie Vol 2 *(Dawn of the Fashion Victims;* Todd Meister & Jennifer Feinberg; tpb) Collects issues #5-9 of Little Scrowlie, in which Scrowlie and co journey to the darkened depths of the underworld and a credit-enabled fashion zombie army is unleashed onto the unsuspecting world. 160pg $12.95

Pirate Club 7 (Derek Hunter) Just when John thinks things couldn't get any stranger, mutiny is declared amongst the ranks of the Pirate Club. 24pg $2.95

new **Rex Libris** 1 (James Turner) The astonishing story of the incomparable Rex Libris, Head Librarian at Middleton Public Library, and his unending struggle against the forces of ignorance and darkness. 24pg .. $2.95



close-up

Baghdad Journal: An Artist in Occupied Iraq

Drawn & Quarterly

Writer/Artist: Steve Mumford

The culmination of four voyages to war-torn Iraq by Steve Mumford. With sketchbook and notepad in hand, he illuminates the activities of a nation in turmoil, from the individual soldiers of US platoons to Baghdad residents going about their daily lives amid the chaos surrounding them. $34.95

ON SALE AUGUST

Antarctic Press

new **Battle Girlz** Vol 1 (Rod Espinosa) Follows the adventures of a team of Supreme heroines, gathered together by a legendary goddess to fight evil across the universe. 160pg b&w $9.99

new **Chisuji** 1 (of 6; Eirik Blackwolf & Leo Saunders) A 2003 air strike on Iraq set of the Change Many people worldwide just developed some special powers. b&w $2.99

one-shot **Chronicles of the Universe: Desperado Brothers** (Rod Espinosa; tpb) In an ancient universe of tremendous power and advanced technology, abuse and corruption led to the Universal Wars. The Desperado Family arose to stop those who would follow in the footsteps of their foolish ancestors. 188pg b&w $9.95

Gold Digger 67 (Fred Perry) Disguised as an adoring fan, the infatuated Oompa-Luompian prince Lawtor slips Ayane Mistress Ano a box of amnesia bon bons. $2.99

new **Heaven Sent** Vol 1 (Ben Dunn) When Kyle Taylor is killed in a traffic accident his life is now under he protection of his guardian angel, Samantha. 144pg b&w $9.99

new **Hiroshima: The Atomic Holocaust** 1 (Ted Nomura) This issue examines the development of the atomic bomb programme and all its problems. b&w £3.99

I Hunt Monsters Vol 2 #8 (Wes Hartman & Craig Babiar) Will, Aarna and Tayesha head for the recently discovered legendary isle of Avalon, hoping to find Merlin's scrolls b&w $2.99

one-shot **Metadocs: The Super ER** (Joeming Dunn & Rod Espinosa) Who saves the superheroes? What happens when the dust settles after an epic battle? 48pg $4.95

one-shot **Mighty Tiny Pocket Manga** (Ben Dunn) In the distant future, man is long gone, but the mice and rats have evolved and developed their own society and wars. 174pg b&w $9.99

Ninja High School 131 (Christopher & Ben Dunn) Quagmire High's faculty searches for its MIA students, and Ricky Feeple is snatched from the jaws of death by a beautiful young woman. b&w $2.99

Oz: The Manga 3 (of 8; David Hutchison) Dorothy listens to the sorrowful tales of her companions and gains newfound resolves to reach the Emerald City. b&w $2.99

AP Comics

new **Abiding Perdition** 1 (Schley & Delgado + Pedroza) In a barren world where darkness stretches its prevailing grasp across the land, Little Red is a starving humanity's only help. Yet will her hatred for evil be its demise, or a mere fillip? $3.50

Dark Mists 4 (Annika Eade & Lee Garbett) Makoto has confronted Kimi about her government activity and informs her that all this time she was being blackmailed by the Yakuza. Mature readers. $3.50

The Gloom 4 (of 6; Tony Lee & Dan Boultwood) Mousey is captured again, The Gloom has returned, and this time he's really angry. $3.50

one-shot **The Lexian Chronicles: Full Circle** (various) The powerful Leopard army appears in force at the walls of Rell. $3.50

new **Midnight Kiss** 1 (Lee & Stegman + MacKinnong) In a shattered multi-world, where every dream is one world's reality, Matthew Sable and Nightmare De'Lacy try to keep the balance. Mature readers. $3.50

Mr T 4 (various) Mr T is about to have the most shocking day of his life. $3.50

Scatterbrain 3 (Brenda Deneen & Tom Sellig) After the reappearance of Scatterbrain. Detective John Anderfold is determined to get to the bottom of the mystery. $3.50

Archie Comics

Archie 560 (various) If you want to know what not to do on a date, then talk to Archie. $2.25

Archie and Friends 94 (various) Mr Lodge makes an emergency landing as the group flies to a gig in Hawaii. $2.25

Betty & Veronica Spectacular 71 (various) When Ms Grundy admires a poncho of Betty's, the girls make one for her. Before you know it, they're clothes designers! $2.25

Jughead 168 (Craig Boldman & Rex Lindsey) When Jug and his pals compete in duelling limbo and hula dance contests, will there be flying feet or hurting hips? $2.25

Sabrina Vol 2 #69 (Tania del Rio) The Magic Realm is about to celebrate its version of Independence Day, but Shinji is obsessing over what he thinks was a mermaid who save his life. $2.25

Sonic the Hedgehog 153 (Boller & Lim + Amash) Sonic's day is about to go from dizzying to deadly when he faces off against one of the deadliest assassins on the planet. $2.25

Veronica 164 (Mike Pellowski & Dan Parent) When a rerouted letter from a secret admirer arrives a year late, Veronica returns to where the admirer first spotted her – the carnival. .. $2.25

Avatar Press

one-shot **Brian Pulido's Lady Death: The Wicked** ½ (Brian Pulido & Richard Ortiz) Lady Death wakes in a small village, separated from Wargoth and Satasha. As night falls, the villagers warn her of The Wicked, a supernatural beast stalking the cursed town. Where is Lady Death exactly? Why is she here? 16pg $2.99

Brian Pulido's Lady Death: Abandon All Hope 3 (of 4; Brian Pulido & Ron Adrian) Lady Death, duped by her mentor Wargoth and almost killed, is sick and tired of his manipulative ways. She plots a fitting revenge that has a most unexpected result. $3.99

new **Brian Pulido's Gypsy** 1 (Brian Pulido & Paulo Siqueira) Sisters Antoinette and Liza are gypsy thieves who love to trick the townspeople out of their money and their belongings. But when a great were-beast terrorises the town, their world is turned upside down. b&w $3.50

Brian Pulido's Medieval Lady Death 7 (Brian Pulido & Wellington Alves) Lady Death is further trained in the ways of Eldritch magic by the enigmatic Seer, and put through a number of life-threatening trials. But the magic-negating assassin Skold tracks her down and forces her into a battle for life and death. $3.99

Bongo Comics

Bart Simpson Comics 25 (various) Bart lives the dream when the Comic Book Guy enlists his help at a comics convention. $2.99

Simpsons Comics 108 (Boothby & Ortiz) Mr Burns, concerned about his public image, decides to open a museum dedicated to his life and legend. $2.99

new **Simpsons Super Spectacular** 1 (Chuck Dixon & various) New series of bi-annual specials. Witness the cream-filled fury of Pieman (a.k.a. Homer Simpson) when an evil doppelganger seeks to tarnish his indignant and indulgent identity! 48pg $4.99

Claypool

Elvira 148 (various) Elvira is kidnapped and brought into the Bemusa Triangle by a band of flyboy adventurers, to use her charms to restore their leader's sanity. b&w $2.50

Deadbeats 73 (Richard Howell & Ricardo Villagran) Years ago, young woodland scouts Dakota Kane and Cain VanSloan narrowly escaped the talons of a monstrous backwoods beast. Now that terror reaches forward to rend a bloody swath through Mystic Grove's present. b&w $2.50

Drawn & Quarterly

one-shot **Baghdad Journal: An Artist in Occupied Iraq** (Steve Mumford; hb) *See Close-Up, above*

Or Else 3 (Kevin Huizenga) Quarterly. Four self-contained stories exploring Franz Kafka's diary and a biography of a noted Mickey Mouse newspaper strip artist. Mature readers. 48pg b&w $3.95

Fantagraphics

Angry Youth Comix 9 (Johnny R[illegible]) Johnny gives us the stupidest, crapp[illegible] dumbest pile of strips he can conjure [illegible] Mature readers. ..... $3[illegible]

one-shot **Art School Confidential** (Dan Clowes & Terry Zwigoff) Presenting the strip in full colour for the first time – it's about to be released as the movie follow-up to Ghost Wor[illegible] 204pg ..... $14[illegible]

one-shot **The Illustrated History of Union Country** (various) Illustrates Frank Thorne's scholarly work about the hist[illegible] of a New Jersey county important to the formation of the US. 192pg b&w $19[illegible]

one-shot **Krazy & Ignatz 1935-36: A Wild Warmth of Chromatic Gravy By George Herman** (ed Bill Blackbeard) Includes all the Sunday strips from the later half of 1935 and all of 193[illegible] 120pg ..... $19[illegible]

Luba's Comics & Stories 6 (various) Luba's adolescent half-sisters Fritz a[illegible] Petra get on that bumpy road to adulthood in a story that will explain Scott the Hog's animosity towards Fritz. 24pg b&w ..... $3[illegible]

The Merchant of Dennis the Menace (various) Memoir from Hank Ketchum with Dennis telling his own story. 256pg b&w ..... $19[illegible]

Image Comics

new **Ant** 1 (Mario Gully) Imag[illegible] losing everything you ever held dear, then waking up from that le[illegible] dark nightmare to find yourself confined to a mental institution. This is Hank Washington's life. ..... $2[illegible]

new **Dusty Star** 1 (Andrew Robinson + Joe Pruett & Andrew Robinson) Welcome to the world of Dusty Star, a tough-as-nails gunslinger with a steely-eyed gaze and a draw as fast as greased lighting! An appealing blend of western, science fiction, adventure and humour. .. $3.50

new **Ferro City** 1 (Jason Armstrong) His partner is dead. The cops are out to pin it on him. And the only solid proof he has to [illegible] himself is a tiny gadget that could grant ten million sentient robots their freedom – the Medusa Key. b&w $2.50

one-shot **The Faceless: A Terry Sharp Story** (Robert Tinnell & Adrian Salmon[illegible] gn) England, 1962. By day, Terry Sharp is a successful director of horror film[illegible] consumer of cocktails and chaser[illegible] skirts. By night, the horror is real as he battles tirelessly against a Satan[illegible] conspiracy that reaches the highest levels of government. 64pg ..... $[illegible]

one-shot **Indigo Vertigo** (Katiejane Garside & Dan Schaffer) This hallucinatory spectacle of one woman's experience on the brink of reality is the result of an unconventional, intuitive creative process, told with poetic, fragmented dialogue and beautifully textured art. 48pg b&w ..... $4.[illegible]

one-shot **Season of the Witch** 0 (Jay Ni[illegible] & Kevin Sharpe + Thomson Knox) Jessica Suddreth was a normal high school freshman until she was magically transported to Asamondo, the fairy-tale world. Once there she trains to be a Spell Sword, a mystical warrior, to lead the peasants of Asamondo against the tyrannical King Elian. 24pg b&w $[illegible]

one-shot **Wings of Anansi** (Michael Avon Oeming & Greg Titus) The story of a mother who went through a lot in life, a

woman who gained and lost, hated and loved, but never once gave up on life. 56pg $6.95

one-shot **Coyote** Vol 1 (Steve Englehart & Marshall Rogers + Tom Palmer; tpb) This collection includes the rare 60-page origin story of Coyote, plus the three-part origin series of Scorpio Rose. 128pg $12.95

one-shot **Ascend Special Edition** (Keith Arem & Christopher Shy) Ascend is set in a time of post-apocalyptic heaven, where the battle for human souls will determine the outcome of a war with Hell. 152pg $29.95

one-shot **The Expatriate** Vol 1 *(Bring Me The Head Of Jack Dexter;* B. Clay Moore & Jason Latour; tpbk) Jack Dexter's mad dash from CIA agents, otherworldly menaces and a world hell bent on his destruction begins here. Collects The Expatriate #1-5. 120pg $11.99

one-shot **Gun Fu** (Howard M. Shum & Shum + Joey Mason + Etienne Simon) The year is 1936. Cheng Bo Sen is a Hong Kong cop. England enlists him as a secret agent to help fight the Nazis. He also speaks hip-hop, which no one seems to notice. Collects Gun Fu #1 and Gun Fu: The Lost City #1-4. 144pg $14.95

Liberty Meadows Book 4 *(Cold, Cold Heart;* Frank Cho; hbk) Jen is a woman on a mission. She has her eyes and claws set on Frank while Brandy helplessly watches from the side. Collects Liberty Meadows 28-36. 144pg b&w $24.95

Savage Dragon Vol 11 *(Resurrection;* Erik Larsen) Savage Dragon is brought back to life in one of the most talked about storylines in this series' lengthy run! Collects Savage Dragon #53-58. 136pg $14.95

The Amazing Joy Buzzards 6 (Mark Smith & Dan Hipp) The Amazing Joy Buzzards, the world's greatest rock and roll adventure band, return in their most dangerous adventure to date as the band faces off against a nefarious group of supernatural-mod-hipsters known as the Spider Syndicate! b&w $2.95

Battle Pope 3 (Robert Kirkman & Tony Moore + Val Staples) Battle Pope finds himself face to face with Lucifer – and Jesus Christ gets crucified – again! This issue's ending is guaranteed to shock. $2.95

Blacklight 3 (Jim Valentino + Scott Wherle & John Toledo + Marc Deering) The emotional roller coaster takes a wicked turn as Lina uncovers the truth behind Kathy's death, sending her on a collision course with a foe much more powerful than Cicada: her own self-doubt. $2.99

Body Bags: Father's Day 2 (Jason Pearson) Panda goes on her first official mission as a Body Bagger, but things turn ugly when she and Mack become the targets! 48pg $5.99

Bone Rest 2 *(Opificium Dei* 1; Matteo Cassali & Guiseppe Camuncoli) Adam Bone's path crosses with PI Max Worst, who's been hired to find out what happened to the man who became Mr Vain – the lunatic last seen fighting Bone. $2.95

Case Files: Sam and Twitch 20 *(Fathers and Daughters* 1; Marc Andreyko & Greg Scott) Twitch's youngest child – and millions like her around the world – love the movies, music and clothes of six-year-old starlet Lacey Ann Lions. But when a horrific tragedy befalls Lacey and her movie-mogul parents, Twitch is flooded with memories of his own lost daughter, Lauren. b&w $2.50

The Darkness vs Mr Hyde: Monster War 4 (Chris Golden + Tom Sniegoski & Joyce Chin + Scott Kester; *Top Cow)* Witchblade, the Magdalena, and Lara Croft persuade Jackie Estacado that they need the Darkness to help in the war against even darker foes. $2.99

Deadworld 3 (Gary Reed & Vincent Locke) As Reluctant saviours of the insane Deake, the teens find themselves on the run from King Zombie and his new soldiers, the savage and powerful Grakken. b&w $3.50

Death, Jr. 3 (Gary Whitta & Ted Naifeh) DJ has gotten himself into some serious trouble. He's killed his best friend, accidentally betrayed his dad and only has a Student Reaper scythe, a ghost and a few freaky friends on his side. How can he make it all right before the whole world goes, literally, to hell? 48pg $4.99

The Expatriate 6 (B. Clay Moore & Jason Latour) February 11, 1964: In Washington, D.C., an astronaut named Glen Johnson is being prepped for a Congressional hero's welcome, four young men from Liverpool are peering out from behind hotel curtains at the throng gathered outside, and a man named Jack Dexter is running for his life. 28pg $2.95

Flak Riot 3 (Robert Place Napton + Michael O'Hare & O'Hare) Zoe finds herself back at home, but not for long as she gets her first bounty and lands in the OD battling along aside an ex-sumo wrestler and cursed ninja in a blazing gunfight! $2.95

Freshmen 2 *(Introduction to Superpowers 102: Costumes* 2 of 6; Hugh Sterbakov & Leonard Kirk + Tyson Wengler; *Top Cow)* Our college freshmen try out their new powers for the first time, form a superteam and go into action! $2.99

Girls 4 (Joshua Luna & Jonathan Luna) In a shocking turn of events, the mystery woman will change the lives of Pennystown irrevocably, and raise more questions than answers: Who is this girl? What does she want? Is she a blessing, or a curse? $2.95

Godland 3 (Joe Casey & Tom Scioli) Featuring the climactic confrontation between Commander Adam Archer and the treacherous Basil Cronus! Meanwhile, the mysterious, all-American superhero known as Crashman is being held captive – and his rescuer will shock you! $2.95

Grounded 2 (Mark Sable & Paul Azaceta) It's your first day of school. The bully can't wait to gouge you with his horns. The beauty queen is literally untouchable. You're about to play a deadly game of dodgeball and – oh yeah – everyone has superpowers but you. $2.95

Guncandy 2 (Doug Wagner + Chuck Dixon & various) Laci destroys everything in her path as she unravels the mystery of who killed her parents when she was a child. 48pg b&w $5.99

Hero Camp 4 (Greg Thompson & Robbi Rodriguez) It's Parents' Day at Camp Enokchuk! After a day of embarrassing stories, Eric and the campers believe it can't get any worse, but a horrible surprise awaits them – a giant purple primate bent on destroying the camp! $2.95

Hunter-Killer 5 (Mark Waid & Marc Silvestri + Joe B. Weems V + Steve Firchow; *Top Cow)* Ellis discovers the first of many hidden truths behind the Hunter-Killer programme, something that will force him to re-think just who the good guys really are! $2.99

Invincible 26 *(A Different World* 2; Robert Kirkman & Ryan Ottley + Bill Crabtree) Mark is in a world completely alien to him. How did he get there? What is happening around him? And who is trying to kill him? $2.95

The Iron Ghost 3 (Chuck Dixon & Sergio Cariello) Tannhauser and Volz continue to follow the trail of the now mythical Iron Ghost. New clues lead them to a German airfield on the Russian front line where the Germans are pinned between a Russian air strike and the ground onslaught from the Ghost himself. $2.95

Mora 4 (Paul Harmon) In the city of witches, forgiveness is a foreign concept, justice, an archaic term. The people are used to pain and know a little bit about suffering, they are hunting a child-killer. b&w $2.95

new **The Necromancer** 1 *(Something in the Way* 1 of 3; Joshua Ortega & Francis Manapul + Kevin Conrad + Brian Buccellato; *Top Cow)* The Necromancer is the story of Abigail van Alstine, a stunning, smart 17-year old high school student who has a knack for The Way – a natural talent for sorcery. $2.99

one-shot **Negative Burn: Summer Special 2005** (various) Negative Burn is an anomaly, merging genres, pushing boundaries and allowing the top comic book talent in the world an opportunity to experiment and tell the stories they want to tell. 96pg b&w $9.95

Noble Causes 13 (Jay Faerber & Fran Bueno) Meet the Blackthornes. They're the criminal element's answer to the Noble family – rich, powerful, and deeply dysfunctional. $3.50

NYC Mech: Beta Love 4 (Ivan Brandon + Miles Gunter & Andy Macdonald) Quentin finally lands a new gig, but it puts him in a bad place, with an even worse crowd. 28pg $2.95

The Pact 4 (Robert Kirkman & Jason Howard) Firebreather, Invincible, Shadowhawk and Zephyr – together again for what may be the last time. When a local town enlists Firebreather's aid in stopping the dreaded Magmanites – he calls in his new pals to help out. But things go horribly wrong. $2.95

PvP 19 (Scott R. Kurtz) Jade's little sister is coming for a visit, but she's not so little anymore. It's been years since Brent has seen Miranda, and where once there stood an awkward thirteen, year now stands a voluptuous college student – and she's got the hots for her sister's boyfriend! b&w $2.95

one-shot **RTA: Personality Crisis** (Pedro Angosto + Gary Carlson & Carlos Rodriguez + Albert Puig) *See Close-Up on facing page.*

Sea of Red 6 (Rick Remender + Kieron Dwyer & Dwyer + Salgood Sam) After 500 years, Marco's wait for revenge ends when he finally confronts the man on whom he blames his fate, Lesser Blackthroat. $2.95

Shadowhawk 4 (Jim Valentino + Jim Keplinger & Carlos Rodriguez + Albert Puig) Eddie has to face his predecessor's most dangerous foe when Hawk's Shadow returns to claim what he considers to be his rightful inheritance – Heru's Helmet. $2.99

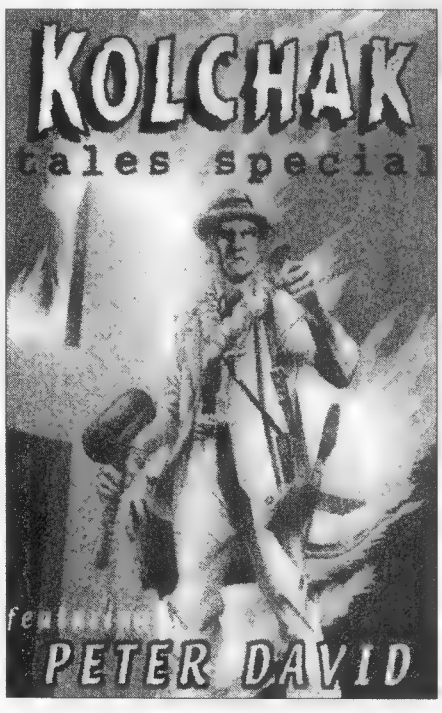
Small Gods 11 *(Nightingale* 2; Jason Rand & Juan E. Ferreyra) In the wake of Cristina's dramatic escape, Hanley and the CIA calculate the cost. b&w $2.95

Spawn 149 *(Random Patterns* 2; Brian Holguin + Todd McFarlane & Angel Medina + Danny Miki) Spawn sifts through the rubble of his life in a desperate attempt to find a terrible secret that the fallen angel Mammon has hidden inside of him. $2.50

Strange Girl 3 (Rick Remender & Eric Nguyen) For the first time since Hell came to Earth, Bethany is unprotected by Belial. As she and Bloato manoeuvre through the new American wilderness they discover the world is nothing as it once was. $2.95

Stupid Comics 3 (Jim Mahfood & Kelly Seda) Popular cartoonist Jim Mahfood (Grrl Scouts, Felt) brings you the latest collection of his comic strips, full of the zesty political and social humour, pop culture parodies, and fun-filled rage. b&w $2.95

Witchblade 89 *(Fugitive* 1 of 3; Ron Marz & Mike Choi + Sal Regla; *Top Cow)* Sara Pezzini is about to confront a foe who could prove to be her ultimate nemesis. $2.99



close-up

Kolchak Tales Special

Moonstone

Writers/Artists: various

Sit in with Carl Kolchak during his visit to a psychiatrist and learn of the fashion model mysteriously turned into stone. Plus: the revelation that Tony Vincenzo may have run into supernatural horrors back when he was a reporter. Features three new tales of the Night Stalker, as we deconstruct Kolchak during his visit to a psychiatrist. 48pg b&w $4.95

ON SALE AUGUST

Moonstone

Belle Starr: Queen of Bandits 2 (Mark Ricketts & Steve Buccellato) Belle Starr's biographer, having witnessed her murder, attempts to bring closure to a tragic story. ..... $2.95.

one-shot **Kolchak Tales Special** (various) *See Close-Up, below.*

Revisionary 2 (Paul D. Storrie & Eric J.) The chase is on and the clock is running down. Normally, if Randall can't save the victims he sees in premonitions, he's got to live with nightmares of their deaths. This time, if he can't stay one step ahead of the killers coming after Grace Warden, she might not die alone. b&w $2.95

The Cisco Kid: Gunfire & Brimstone 2 (Len Kody & Dennis Calero) If he was lucky, most mornings he'd wake up with a splitting headache and a demon's case of cottonmouth. Not so today: his murdered girl's father, a shaman, wants Cisco's soul. b&w $2.95

Oni Press

Alison Dare: Little Miss Adventures Vol 2 (J. Torres & J. Bone) Dr Alice dare teaches a thing or two about museum mayhem. 120pg b&w $11.95

Banana Sundays 2 (Root Nibot & Colleen Coover) Kirby and her talking monkeys continue to adjust to life at Forest Edge High. $2.99

Little Star 4 (Andi Watson) Simon continues to struggle with balancing his commitment to his job with the needs of his family. $2.99

one-shot **Lola** (J. Torres & R'John Bernales) Upon his grandmother's death, Jesse has no choice but to face up to his demons and whatever else might be awaiting him in granma's house. 72pg b&w $5.95

Sirius

new **Poison Elves: Dominion** 1 (Keith Davidsen & Scott Lewis) Lusiphur's pal Jace is an idealistic young soldier who joins an elite command unit serving the Elven High Council. But things get pretty rocky pretty quickly. b&w $3.50

Poison Elves: Ventures 4 *(Jace;* Keith Davidsen & Aaron Bordner) Deep in the bowels of the Troll stronghold, Jace fights in arena combat for the amusement of his jailers. Mature readers. b&w $3.50

Tokyopop

All Grown Up 2 (various; tpb) Lil doesn't want to act like a twin any more, she would rather do things on her own without her brother, Phil. Soon after, Dil recruits himself as Phil's new twin. However, Lil's new attitude is threatening the family's trip to the Twins Canyon theme park, where twins get in for half-off, if they dress alike. 96pg $7.99

new **Bizenghast** 1 (various; tpb) Dinah is getting the once-over by the doctor and calls her friend Vincent to bail her out. 192pg $9.99

new **Blame!** 1 (various; tpb) If Killy is going to find the treasure he seeks, he will need more help and information than the inhabitants of these beleaguered outposts can offer. 256pg $9.99

CLAMP No Kiseki 3 (various; tpb) Features full-colour pages, exclusive material, six pages of new manga, and limited edition collectible figures! $29.99

Cross 4 (various; tpb) The mystery of Sister Caterina continues. When Takara discovers the abhorrent secret of her past and the truth behind her current 'pregnancy' he decides to perform an exorcism. 192pg $9.99

Dragon Knights 20 (various; tpb) With all three Dragon Knights imprisoned, the fate of the Dragon Realm is in an unlikely set of hands... Zoma's! 192pg $9.99

Dream Saga 5(various; tpb) The Amanoiwato project was to completely destroy the world so that it could be recreated. Takaomi, Susanoo, is not only one of the successors of Amatsukami, but his role is to transform into the god of destruction and eat Amaterasu, the sun, thereby destroying the two worlds. 216pg $9.99

Duel Masters 5 (various; tpb) Shobu and his friends go to this new centre where kids from all over the world learn how to play Duel Masters. Upon arrival, in spite of Knight's warning Shobu rush to find a duel with Hakuoh. Shobu soon discovers Hakuoh hides at the Temple guarded by a goblin and that he will need to win 50 duels to face him. 96pg $7.99

Fruits Basket 11 (various; tpb) Still at the Sohma family vacation house, Tohru and the gang are obliged to visit Akito everyday because Akito is at the other vacation house. 216pg $9.99

Getbackers 11 (various; tpb) When Ban and Ginji are left out in the cold again and unable to pay even their tab at the coffee shop, it's up to Ban to come up with a scheme to lead them out of debt. 200pg $9.99

Girl Got Game 10 (various; tpb) Kyo's secret has been revealed to the entire basketball team, and now she has made a deal to defeat the whole team single-handedly or leave forever. 192pg $9.99

GTO 25 (various; tpb) The truth behind Principal Daimon and Shibuya is revealed as the school is ablaze and Onizuka fights for his life. 224pg $9.99

one-shot **.Hack//Al Buster** (various; tpb) Al buster follows the adventures of Albireo, as he plays a beta version of what will soon be known as The World. 240pg $7.99

Hands Off! 4 (various; tpb) Thrown in jail for a night for a crime he didn't commit, Tatsuki spirals closer to an emotional breakdown, and keeping his feelings to himself leaves him teetering perilously close to the edge. 176pg $9.99

Heaven Above Heaven 2 (various; tpb) Bakhong's big brother was defeated by the Ma-do-il-sum sword technique, leaving him in a comatose state. In a quest for vengeance, Bakhong joins one of the most powerful dojos in town – Moo Young Sook. 176pg $9.99

new **Honey Mustard: Love At Second Sight!** 1 (various; tpb) Ara has had a crush on the hottest boy in high school. When she works up the nerve to ask him out, she gets all glammed up and boozed up and ends up kissing Young-Woo, the wrong boy! 176pg $9.99

Initial D 19 (various; tpb) As the race between Project D and the wildcard Toudou School looms in the near future, each team meticulously prepares for battle. 240pg $9.99

Lament of the Lamb 7 (various; tpb) Chizuna descends into a state of unconsciousness, in which a stunning flashback uncovers shocking secrets about her past – and the true nature of her disturbing disorder. 264pg .. $9.99

one-shot **@Large** (various; tpb) The final hour is approaching. It may be Armageddon for the Emcees, as True Epic and Broke have to battle the Red Coast takeover. Priest and Marks come face to face with the Russian, and Hennesy falls in love. 192pg $9.99

Lizzie McGuire Cine-Manga 13 (various; tpb) It's lights, cameras and action, action, action when Gordo decides to set up hidden cameras around the school to record everyone's most embarrassing moments. 96pg .. $7.99

Passion Fruit Softcover 2 (various; tpb) A young girl in an isolated town has an out-of-the-ordinary experience; a surfer and his gal make waves in their turbulent relationship; and a boy and his twin sister must deal with feelings of being abandoned. 184pg $9.99

Rave Master 16 (various; tpb) Light is struck down before the powers of darkness. But it's not over yet! Our final hope is to find the Silver Claimer's Ultimate Weapon – Silver Ray. 192pg $9.99

Rebirth 15 (various; tpb) Still reeling from the reappearance of their missing comrade – Millenear – Deshwitat and the team are instructed in the rules of this deadly contest. 200pg $9.99

Rising Stars of Manga 5 (various; tpb) Anthology featuring the winners of Tokyopop's national Rising Stars of Manga contest. 192pg $9.99

Rizelmine (various; tpb) Tomonori Iwaki is a hapless 15-year old student who just had his heart broken when the teacher he had a crush on got engaged. He goes home to find that he's got a wife of his own though, even if she may look like a grade-schooler. 144pg $9.99

new **Saiyuki Reload** 1 (various; tpb) The fearsome foursome continue their journey west towards Shangri-La, encountering new challenges and new adventures along the way. 200pg $9.99

Samurai Deeper Kyo 15 (various; tpb) Kyo and company finally penetrate the Mibu headquarters. Later, while fighting off an onslaught of Mibu assassins, Bontenmaru and Akira fall into an enemy trap! 192pg $9.99

new **Scrapped Princess** 1 (various; tpb) Fifteen years ago, a set of twins – a girl and a boy – was born to the king of Linevan. Shortly after their birth, a prophecy foretold that when the girl turned 16, she would bring about the end of humanity. 184pg $9.99

Shaolin Sisters: Reborn 2 (various; tpb) It is a dark time for humanity, as one by one the White Lotus Four awaken and prepare for their master's revival. 216pg $9.99

Shutterbox 3 (various; tpb) In order to face and capture the terrible Banshee lurking inside Lewis Carroll's urn, Thomas helps Megan enter yet another realm in the afterlife of Merridiah. 192pg $9.99

Snow Drop 10 (various; tpb) Hae-Gi and So-Na are madly in love, but their romance is facing Romeo and Juliet-style repercussions. 184pg $9.99

one-shot **Spongebob Squarepants: Meow... Like A Snail?!** (various; tpb) Gary is sick and Squidward has come over to watch Gary so SpongeBob can go away for the weekend. 96pg .. $7.99

Tokyo Tribes 3 (various; tpb) As the rivalry between Mera and Kai rages on, Kai runs into trouble on the home front – and on the homeboy front. 208pg $9.99

Tramps Like Us 6 (various; tpb) Everyone muses on how they don't understand Sumire. But Sumire's pet Momo understands Sumire all too well. When everyone cuts in front of Sumire in line, Momo teaches her that if she doesn't stand up for herself, she will lose something precious. 192pg $9.99

Vampire Game 12 (various; tpb) Rishas, Duzell's former lover and companion, has been reincarnated as Lailis, the Queen of Lodoc. Lailis confesses that she was reincarnated to find Duzell and serve him once again. 208pg $9.99

close-up

RTA: Personality Crisis

Image

Writers: Pedro Angosto + Gary Carlson

Artists: Carlos Rodriguez + Albert Puig

It begins as a battle with an unliving Golem, who uses the powers of the Round Table of America against them. It turns into a nightmare when the omnipotent being known as the Living Archetype launches an assault upon their minds from the demented dimension he calls the Collective Unconscious! $3.50

ON SALE AUGUST

UK Newsstand

DC Thomson

The Beano 3264-3268 (weekly; various) Classic kids humour anthology featuring Dennis the Menace, the Bash Street Kids, and all your favourites. £0.55

Beano Superstars 162 (various) One complete strip of the long-running humour anthology. 36pg £0.65

Classics from the Comics 108 (various) Anthology reprinting classic cartoon strips from DC Thomson's Beano and Dandy. 68pg b&w £1.20

Commando Action and Adventure Stories 3790-3798 (eight per month; digest; various) Featuring one self-contained comic strip per issue, with soldierly undercover action. Some new material. 68pg b&w £1.00

The Dandy 3294-3297 (weekly; various) Classic kids humour anthology featuring Desperate Dan, Korky the Cat, and all your favourites. £0.55

Fun-Size Beano 181-182 (fortnightly; various) Pocket-sized spin-off from the Beano featuring Dennis the Menace, the Bash Street Kids, Mini the Minx and all the usual suspects. 68pg £0.60

Panini Comics

Astonishing Spider-Man 130 (four-weekly; various) The pencilling debut of fan-favourite Todd McFarlane, featuring Spider-Man's first encounter with mercenary for hire, Chance! Reprints Amazing volume 1 #501, 298 & Spider-Man/Human Torch #2. 76pg £2.40

Avengers United 57 (four-weekly; various) Mount Rushmore has become a wasteland of dead bodies and the Avengers want to find out why! Collects Avengers volume 3 #66-67 and vol 1 #112. 76pg £2.40

Batman: Legends 25 (four-weekly; various) Catwoman makes her move in the conclusion to *Batman: Year One*. Reprints Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #182, Nightwing #96 and Batman #407. 76pg £2.40

Doctor Who Magazine 360 (four-weekly; tbc) The continuing all-new comic strip adventures of the Ninth Doctor and Rose. 68pg £3.99

Doctor Who Magazine Annual 2006 (various) Featuring all-new stories from the show's writers and a comicstrip adventure based on the new TV series. £6.99

Essential X-Men 130 (four-weekly; Claremont & Kordey + Hanna) William Stryker once almost destroyed every mutant on Earth, and now he's free again! But why is Lady Deathstrike helping him? Reprints X-Treme X-Men #25-27. 76pg £2.40

Fantastic Four Adventures 3 (four-weekly; Kesel & Immonen; Lee & Kirby) The Thing and the Human Torch are in for an embarrassing night when the Fantasticar gets stolen! Collects FF vol 3 #55-56 and vol 1 #3. 76pg £2.40

Fantastic Four Annual 2006 (various) The ultimate movie companion, packed with up-to-the minute comic strips, in-depth fact files and features. £6.99

Marvel Heroes Annual 2006 (various) The world's greatest superheroes, including Captain America, Thor, the X-Men and Spider-Man join to save mankind from a threat never seen before! £6.99

Marvel Rampage 11 (four-weekly; various) Packed with features and original comic strips starring Spider-Man and the Hulk! 44pg £1.75

Mighty World of Marvel 34 (four-weekly; various) The birth of Ghost Rider and the rebirth of Meggan! Reprints Marvel Spotlight #5, Daredevil vol 1 #9, Captain Britain #9 and Hulk vol 1 #141. 76pg £2.40

Spectacular Spider-Man 120 (three-weekly; tbc) Original comic strips featuring Spider-Man teaming up with favourite Marvel characters. 36pg £1.75

Spider-Man Annual 2006 (various) A bumper blast of web-slinging, wall-crawling adventure! £6.99

Ultimate Fantastic Four #6 (four-weekly; Ellis & Immonen + Grawbadger) The FF race to Copenhagen to confront Victor van Damme, unaware that their arch-nemesis is ready for their arrival! Reprints Ultimate FF #11-12. 52pg £1.95

Ultimate Spider-Man & X-Men 46 (four-weekly; various) Cyclops, Marvel Girl, Shadowcat, and Iceman encounter the six-armed siren, Spiral! Collects Ultimate Spider-Man #64 & Ultimate X-Men #55. 52pg £1.95

Wolverine & Deadpool 116 (four-weekly; various) Wolverine faces his demons in *Xisle*. Reprints Wolverine: The End #5, Wolverine: Xisle #4 and Deadpool #5. 76pg. £2.40

X-Men Annual 2006 (various) Packed with exciting strips, puzzles, and fact-files about the world's favourite team of mutants! £6.99

Rebellion

2000AD #1450-1454 (various) Judge Dredd comes down hard of a suspected terrorist, plus a major new villain arrives in Mega-City One. £1.75

2000AD Extreme Edition 11 (various) Bimonthly. Collecting the little-seen classics complete and uncut, and digitally restored. 116pg £2.99

Judge Dredd Megazine 234 (various) Dredd gets the bird as *The Monsterus Mashinashuns of PJ Maybe* continues. 100pg £4.50

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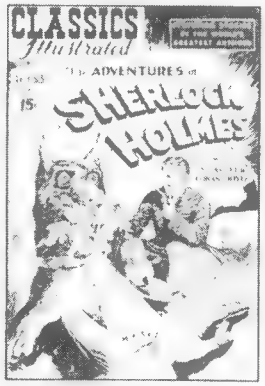

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WEIRD FANTASY
Comics and Annuals

Comics Creators: Be afraid. Rich Johnston may not be Lying In The Gutter again this issue, but he will return next month!

Networks

Comics news and gossip on the Internet

Compiled by Chris Rice and his team of Netmites

Net notes

Who Needs San Diego?

UK comic conventions tend to be lower-key affairs than their US counterparts. But at least one US writer prefers them. Joe Casey visited this year's Bristol Expo, and had the following to say in his Basement Tapes column on comicbookresources.com:

Seriously, I had high hopes for my first UK convention experience and, I gotta' say, I wasn't disappointed. Compared to the monstrosity that is San Diego, this thing was comics all the way. No Marvel, no DC... no American publishers represented whatsoever. And yet, it was still the most comics-centric show I've ever been to...

You know what it was? It was talking about comic-books – with fellow pros and fans alike – without a hint of self-consciousness on any level. Not a goddamned molecule of it, as far as I could read. That was a big deal. We haven't quite evolved to that point over here. We may be getting there, slowly but surely, but we ain't there yet.

And among the pros, there was no real hierarchy that I could see. Everybody that was there just made comics, period. There was mutual respect all around, but no false kings. Pretty refreshing, actually, and it allowed for more genuine conversations.

Whilst Networks must admit to a slight bias here (being published by the very same company that co-organizes the Expos), it's still nice to see that the bigger flashier conventions aren't always better than our home-grown efforts!

Faith in The Fallen

Following on from last month's news about Peter David on Spider-Man, comes good news for fans of his **Fallen Angel** book, recently cancelled by DC Comics. David reveals on peterdavid.com:

*We had wanted to wait on an announcement to have the final contracts signed (they're not) and having sample artwork from the new artist (we don't). But Bob Wayne just announced at the Wizard Philly Con that **Fallen Angel** is going to IDW, so the timing ship has just sailed from the harbor. So yeah, **Fallen Angel** will be relaunching in December (we hope) from IDW. The first storyline will reveal the Angel's true origin and be an ideal jumping on point for anyone who hasn't read it until now.*

It's also rumoured that Ed Brubaker and Sean Phillips' follow-up to **Sleeper** may go to IDW, but in the meantime, Networks eagerly awaits the new series of **Fallen Angel**, having thoroughly enjoyed the DC run.

All-Star Millar

Master of self-promotion Mark Millar popped up on Brian Vaughan's messageboard recently to confirm that he would indeed be taking six months or so off from comics after finishing his current roster of Marvel work:

*I'm planning to write other stuff for about six months and then come back and focus on MillarWorld 2. We're looking at a Fall release for this stuff and this will be my return to comics, five mini-series I've already lined up the art teams for. My last company-owned thing for a while will be **Ultimate Fantastic Four** #32 in June and then there will be nothing until I sign a new contract in early 2007 (though at this point I'm unable to say who the character or characters are going to be).*

*As regards **The Ultimates**, we have no plans to do **Ultimates 3**, minis, specials or whatever after our run concludes. This will be as far as we're taking the characters and someone else will be writing and drawing **Ultimates 3**, a brand spanking new team and, before anyone asks, these lucky people haven't been chosen yet.*

Vaughan decided to have a little fun however:

I knew this thread would bring that self-centered douche scurrying out of the shadows. If there's one thing Millar loves writing about, it's himself. Too bad DC owns the rights to his distinctive name and likeness thereof ever since he wrote himself into that Flash story a few years ago... and guess who Paul Levitz just offered the chance to write Mark's ongoing adventures?

*That's right, get ready for **All-Star Millar**, written by yours truly and drawn by Hitch, coming in early 2007! It's the adventures of a tiny Scotsman trying to make it in a big world, DC style!*

Millar comes back with: ***All-Star Millar** sounds really, really great. Congrats on finally coming up with something I'm actually looking forward to, BKV. And with my name on your solicits you might break that 20K barrier at last!!!!!*

Vaughan retorted: *My 20,000 readers can actually read. All you have are illiterates who like to look at pictures of explosions.*

Then, in an apparent change of heart, Millar: *I just wanted to apologize to BKV for my above comments. He is a much younger, handsomer, more talented writer than I could ever hope to be, and my jealousy sometimes manifests itself in oddly passionate ways. Sure, **Y** (**The Last Man**) has sold more copies in Indonesia alone than **Unfunnies** and **Chosen** combined will ever sell worldwide, but that's no reason for me to abuse the lad.*

To which Vaughan ends: *Cheers, mate! Wise of you not to fuck with the one guy who can edit your posts!*

Gothic Disney?

Over at The Beat on Comicon.com, the lovely Heidi McDonald has scooped the news of a rather interesting licensing deal:

*Slave Labor has signed a licensing deal with... WALT DISNEY. Slave Labor will put out four comics titles: **Haunted Mansion**, an anthology based on the ride; **Gargoyles**, based on the cartoon, and written by creator Greg Weisman; **Wonderworld**, a spin-off of the animated film* Alice in Wonderland *but minus Alice; and **Tron**. Yes,*

***Tron**. The book will bridge the gap between the cult movie and the cult video game. More details to come.*

This is surprising move for Slave Labor, best known for their adult humour books, including **Johnny The Homicidal Maniac**, **Milk & Cheese** and **Lenore**. They have proved that they can produce high quality books though, so it can only be to the good that Disney is taking a chance with a smaller publisher.

Networks is particularly looking forward to **Tron**...

House of M.com

Not exactly news, but Marvel has pulled a nice little trick over at its website. Visitors to Marvel.com get a brief look at the site before it abrubtly switches and is replaced by House Of M.com, full of news about the world that will be replacing the regular Marvel universe in summer.

There are lots o sneak peeks and clues to the reputedly world-changing events, and should be visited if you've any interest in the series.

Sign of The Times

Finishing off as we started out, here's another close to home story...

An interesting item was posted on Quality's newly launched second attempt at a **CI** Forum (after the first got hijacked a few years back). Check out http://groups.yahoo.com/group/quality-comms for a witty piece by our very own reviewer, Rob Nott:

*The Thursday edition of **The Times** newspaper featured a charming article in which all comicbook fans were labelled misogynists. I don't actually read **The Times** myself (**Guardian** reader through and through) but the article was thrust under my nose.*

*If, like me, you don't actually hate women (well, no more than you reasonably hate men anyway), and you feel this is a bit insulting really, you might want to check out the article and send **The Times** a letter. If you use the search engine on **The Times**' website (search for Comic Contempt or Sin City) you'll find it.*

I've sent them the following by e-mail:

Dear Sir,

*As an ambitious writer eager to break into the heady and exciting world of 'hip' journalism, I was delighted to read the article (Comic Contempt by Kevin Maher) in the Thursday edition of **The Times** that cleverly branded anyone who read comics as a misogynist.*

For years my style of making sweeping generalisations without bothering to do any real research has been out of fashion with national newspapers and subsequently my ambitions have been cruelly thwarted.

*Hurrah then for **The Times** – a newspaper that bravely makes space for crude name calling based on personal prejudices!*

I have in mind an article of equal length setting out the reasonable theory that anyone who watches football is a racist, homophobic neo-Nazi sympathiser.

Perhaps you would be so kind as to tell me which editorial chap I should address it to? I look forward to a long and rewarding career writing for your newspaper!

*Keep up the good work! We'll have those smart-ass **Guardian** readers in a hissy fit before long!*

As is the way with message boards, this led into a discourse on whether it's wise to hurl abuse back, whether the feature was right (!) or whether we should all send non-reinforcing titles to counter their belief.

All pointless as **The Times** will have moved on to another hapless group of victims by now, but good fun nevertheless!

Chris Bunting's COMICS WEBWORLD

Manga Mania: A real treat this month for those of you interested in manga (of which we know that there are plenty!), as I look at a handful of fine sites dedicated to comicdom's fastest growing area...

MANGA LIFE **www.mangalife.com**

This site is very much a new kid on the net, brought to us by the makers of the mighty Silver Bullet Comic Books (www.silverbulletcomicbooks.com) no less. But does it really have what it takes to succeed both in cyberspace and against so much well-established competition? Already boasting awesome aesthetics, a cultured community, and up-to-the-minute news, how can it not? Like the best sites, it maintains a degree of simplicity amongst it all to remain accessible and visitor friendly. Recommended. 9

SWEATDROP STUDIOS **www.sweatdrop.com**

If you've not heard of Sweatdrop you're probably not alone, for this UK-based studio – whose goal is to produce quality original UK manga – is criminally overlooked. Here you can order their titles such as **Artifaxis** and **Looking for the Sun**, but you can make sure that you'll be completely happy with your purchase by using what has to be the coolest and most innovative online comic preview system ever designed. 9

TOKYOPOP UK **www.tokyopop.co.uk**

This cyberhome of the fledgling UK arm of the manga and Cine-Manga powerhouse publisher is light on the ground, especially when compared to its superb sister site – www.tokyopop.com – but it is early days. Therefore many of you will no doubt be glad to be aware of Tokyopop UK's online presence ready for when it expands. I myself only chanced upon it thanks to a link on Manga Life 7

MANGA NEWS **www.manganews.net**

If it's the latest announcements from publishers such as Viz, Infinity Studios, Dark Horse and, of course, Tokyopop that you're after, then Manga News is for you. There's also an excellent Releases listing along with a strong discussion forum, and while the Publisher and Creator listings need some updating, how many other sites give you the option to decide how it looks? And they're on the lookout for good reviewers... 8

Honourable mentions: **MegaTokyo [www.megatokyo.com]** and **Manga Workshop [www.mangaworkshop.net]**

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Comics Economics

Top 100 US comicbook sales for February 2005

New Avengers still at #1

Rank	Prior	Title, Issue, Price & Estimated Orders	Publisher
1	(=)	**New Avengers #3** $2.25 148,973	Marvel
2	(4)	**Astonishing X-Men #8** $2.99 134,134	Marvel
3	(6)	**Superman/Batman #17** $2.95 116,637	DC Comics
4	(2)	**Ultimates Volume 2 #3** $2.99 108,378	Marvel
5	(7)	**Green Lantern: Rebirth #4** $2.95 108,077	DC Comics
6	(8)	**Superman #213** $2.50 101,258	DC Comics
7	(3)	**X-Men: Phoenix – Endsong #2** $2.99 98,339	Marvel
8	(6)	**Uncanny X-Men #455** $2.25 88,920	Marvel
9	(N)	**Young Avengers #1** $2.99 87,951	Marvel
10	(8)	**Uncanny X-Men #456** $2.25 86,767	Marvel

Astonishing X-Men up to #2

11	(6)	**Ultimate Spider-Man #72** $2.25 86,585	Marvel
12	(7)	**X-Men #167** $2.25 84,155	Marvel
13	(5)	**Ultimate X-Men #56** $2.25 83,720	Marvel
14	(10)	**Wolverine #25** $2.25 83,180	Marvel
15	(9)	**Amazing Spider-Man #517** $2.25 78,584	Marvel
16	(7)	**X-Men: Phoenix – Endsong #3** $2.99 74,783	Marvel
17	(15)	**Ultimate Nightmare #5** $2.25 73,082	Marvel
18	(14)	**Teen Titans #21** $2.50 66,861	DC Comics
19	(16)	**JLA #111** $2.25 64,540	DC Comics
20	(16)	**Marvel Knights Spider-Man #11** $2.99 60,480	Marvel
■ International direct market retail orders estimated below 60,000			
21	(19)	**Batman #637** $2.25 58,034	DC Comics
22	(17)	**X-Men/Fantastic Four #3** $3.50 57,047	Marvel
23	(=)	**Supreme Power #15** $2.99 55,510	Marvel
24	(20)	**X-23 #3** $2.99 54,289	Marvel
25	(18)	**JLA: Classified #4** $2.95 53,606	DC Comics
26	(N)	**Seven Soldiers #0** $2.95 53,217	DC Comics
27	(N)	**Black Panther #1** $2.99 50,490	Marvel
■ International direct market retail orders estimated below 50,000			
28	(24)	**Daredevil #70** $2.99 46,702	Marvel
29	(21)	**Captain America #3** $2.99 48,104	Marvel
30	(N)	**Shanna The She Devil #1** $3.50 47,954	Marvel
31	(25)	**Spectacular Spider-Man #25** $2.25 47,727	Marvel
32	(27)	**Fantastic Four #523** $2.99 46,278	Marvel
33	(26)	**Incredible Hulk #78** $2.99 44,721	Marvel
34	(31)	**Flash #219** $2.25 44,071	DC Comics
35	(28)	**JSA #70** $2.50 42,664	DC Comics
36	(32)	**Excalibur #9** $2.99 41,187	Marvel
37	(N)	**Hunter Killer #1** $2.99 40,064	Image
38	(41)	**Outsiders #21** $2.50 40,032	DC Comics
39	(32)	**Detective Comics #803** $2.95 40,014	DC Comics
■ International direct market retail orders estimated below 40,000			
40	(30)	**Legion of Super Heroes #3** $2.95 39,951	DC Comics
41	(34)	**Outsiders #20** $2.50 39,051	DC Comics
42	(35)	**The Punisher #17** $2.99 38,714	Marvel
43	(36)	**Conan #13** $2.99 38,645	Dark Horse
44	(36)	**Excalibur #10** $2.99 37,589	Marvel
45	(34)	**Strange #4** $3.50 37,449	Marvel
46	(40)	**Action Comics #824** $2.50 37,432	DC Comics
47	(41)	**Nightwing #103** $2.25 36,921	DC Comics
48	(33)	**New X-Men #10** $2.99 36,910	Marvel
49	(47)	**Nightwing #104** $2.25 36,411	DC Comics
50	(41)	**X-Force #6** $2.99 35,833	Marvel
51	(37)	**Adventures of Superman #637** $2.50 33,265	DC Comics
52	(N)	**Daredevil: Redemption #1** $2.99 33,091	Marvel
53	(50)	**Space Ghost #4** $2.95 32,865	DC Comics
54	(46)	**Batman Gotham Knights #62** $2.50 32,789	DC Comics

55	(51)	**Exiles #59** $2.99 32,337	Marvel
56	(47)	**Robin #135** $2.25 32,331	DC Comics
57	(49)	**Green Arrow #47** $2.50 31,553	DC Comics
58	(48)	**Avengers: Earth's Mightiest Heroes #7** $3.50 31,025	Marvel
59	(52)	**Catwoman: When In Rome #4** $3.50 30,874	DC Comics
60	(58)	**Avengers: Earth's Mightiest Heroes #8** $3.50 30,636	Marvel
61	(57)	**Justice League Elite #8** $2.50 30,555	DC Comics
62	(N)	**Runaways #1** $2.99 30,410	Marvel
63	(56)	**Marvel Knights 4 #15** $2.99 30,230	Marvel
64	(52)	**Daredevil: Redemption #2** $2.99 30,137	Marvel
■ International direct market retail orders estimated below 30,000			
65	(62)	**Birds of Prey #79** $2.50 29,510	DC Comics
66	(53)	**New Thunderbolts #5** $2.99 29,377	Marvel
67	(64)	**Batgirl #61** $2.50 28,796	DC Comics
68	(63)	**Powers #9** $2.95 28,512	Marvel
69	(65)	**Spawn #143** $2.50 28,408	Image
70	(N)	**X-Force: Shatterstar #1** $2.99 28,361	Marvel
71	(66)	**Marvel Team-Up #5** $2.25 28,141	Marvel
72	(N)	**X-23 #1** $2.99 27,526	Marvel
73	(54)	**Darkness Superman #2** $2.99 27,520	Image
74	(70)	**X-Men Unlimited #7** $2.99 27,009	Marvel
75	(67)	**Batman Legends of the Dark Knight #188** $2.50 26,400	DC Comics
76	(55)	**Stormbreaker: Saga of Beta Ray Bill #2** $2.99 26,365	Marvel
77	(72)	**Y: The Last Man #31** $2.95 25,825	DC Comics
78	(71)	**Cable/Deadpool #12** $2.99 25,349	Marvel
79	(N)	**Batman: The Man Who Laughs** $6.95 25,326	DC Comics
80	(73)	**Wonder Woman #213** $2.25 24,728	DC Comics
81	(69)	**Nightcrawler #6** $2.99 24,641	Marvel
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83	(60)	**Fantastic Four Foes #2** $2.99 24,177	Marvel
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89	(69)	**Spider-Man/Human Torch #2** $2.99 22,448	Marvel
90	(74)	**Superman: Strength #2** $5.95 22,314	DC Comics
91	(78)	**Gambit #7** $2.99 22,233	Marvel
92	(97)	**Ex Machina #8** $2.95 22,169	DC Comics
93	(80)	**Black Widow #6** $2.99 21,478	Marvel
94	(82)	**Mystique #24** $2.99 21,426	Marvel
95	(81)	**District X #10** $2.99 21,25	Marvel
96	(N)	**Livewires #1** $2.99 20,944	Marvel
97	(86)	**The Authority: Revolution #5** $2.95 20,683	DC Comics
98	(83)	**Captain America & The Falcon #12** $2.99 20,678	Marvel
99	(89)	**GI Joe #40** $2.95 20,469	Devils Due
100	(120)	**Star Wars: Obsession #3** $2.99 20,382	Dark Horse

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Reviews

*Because few retailers allow titles to be read before purchase, **CI**'s comprehensive reviews section enables comics readers to keep abreast of the wide range of titles currently being published and draw readers' attention to comics they might otherwise ignore. Naturally, this section is of even greater benefit to readers who rely solely on mail order, as they can only judge the quality of a title after purchase.*

***Review codes:** Individual titles are judged against all similar comics past and present on a **1** to **10** basis, while a comparison is made against previous issues of the same title, ranging from <---> to <+++>. Hence, a quality comic may score an 8 against all others, but have slid from a previous issue's 9, denoted by <->. No change is marked <=>. We do not compare **Bone** with **X-Men**, but review each within their genre.*

***Review panel:** Jon Edwards (JE), Kelvin Green (KG), Stephen Hooker (SH), David Knight (DK), Scott Montgomery (SM), Kieron Mullens (KM), Ian Murphy (IM), Rob Nott (RN), Terence Stewart (TS), Alex Thompson (MAT)*

Dark Horse

Conan 16

by Busiek & Nord + Stewart + Starkings

REH would approve, I think, of the labour of love and attention to detail that Kurt Busiek and Cary Nord apply to the fleshing out of Conan's early career. Steering clear of being too politically correct, Busiek ensures that the flavour of the Hyborian age remains – warts and all. Much of the credit has to go to the consistently wonderful art, which avoids the D&D clichés prevalent on far too many fantasy paperback covers these days. (RN) 8

The Goon 12

by Powell

<=> When the deranged metal-headed scientist Dr Alloy attacks the city, The Goon's hands are tied dealing with his robotic minions, leaving only foul-mouthed Franky and Alloy's Mexican-speaking lizard manservant to save them all: just another day in the warped world of Eric Powell's satirical pastiche of the clichés in 1950s pulp sci-fi, then. Although a little too slick for the tone of the title, Robin Powell's smooth colours work well with the pencil shading. (MAT) 8

DC Comics

Batman: Dark Detective 1

by Englehart & Rogers + Austin

In 1977 Steve Englehart, Marshall Rogers and Terry Austin were producing the best darn Batman comic ever. And now the team is back and once more producing the best darn Batman comic available. Silver St Cloud looks as gorgeous as ever, while Batman/Bruce Wayne acts as if the last 20 years never happened – no worryingly psychotic impulses here (beyond dressing up as a bat, of course). Rogers' art has evolved into a more fluid cartoon style, with less graphic intensity, but Austin's inks help keep things on track. Englehart, who hasn't produced much worthwhile of late, reveals that he was born to write Batman, and that the first time around wasn't just a fluke. If you buy only one Batman comic, buy this! (TS) 8

Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight 191

by Torres & Lopez + Blanco

It's not the most alluring artwork but it does do its job in unfolding J. Torres' story, without overworking it or overwhelming it. Whether this is by luck or design, it should, nevertheless, be applauded. It all contributes to a restrained telling of Mr Freeze's descent into madness. An adult book, minus the usual trimmings of excess and profanity. (SH) 7

The Batman Strikes! 8

by Methany & Jones + Beatty

<-> *Firefall* sees the young Dark Knight engaged in a return bout with the villainous Firefly. This incendiary-packing, insect-obsessed bad guy is like a dark flipside to Batman, using his athletic prowess and hi-tech gadgetry for nefarious purposes. **The Batman Strikes!** is an okay read, with some decent art, but at the moment it seems to amount to nothing more than a big fight with a different member of the Gotham rogues gallery every issue. (SM) 6

Desolation Jones 1

by Ellis & Williams III: WildStorm

A truly inspired new series by the unpredictable Warren Ellis. Surpassing even the excellent quality of his work on **Planetary**, **Desolation Jones** has Ellis breaking free of the stereotypical character clichés found in many of his run-of-the-mill miniseries to offer a more interesting and fully rounded protagonist. This is my pick of the month and shows the sort of work Ellis is able to achieve when he's not trying to write a John Constantine clone over and over again. (RN) 9

Ex Machina 10

by Vaughan & Harris + Feister; WildStorm Signature

<=> After a particularly gruesome encounter with the subway killer, whose surprise identity is revealed, Brian K. Vaughan provides more shocks as the liberal New York Mayor Hundred presides over a same-sex marriage. Tony Harris's attractive artwork still has the nagging photo-referenced stiffness, although I feel sorry for the models used for the bloody opening scenes... (MAT) 7

Lex Luthor Man of Steel 3

by Azzarello & Bermejo

Less is definitely more here. While the art from Lee Bermejo might get a little ahead of itself in terms of style and proportion, Brian Azzarello's story is so underplayed it adds to the build up of unease for the reader. Watching Lex Luthor manipulate Bruce Wayne is both mesmerising and depressing at the same time. I'm hooked and straight on to eBay for those back issues! (SH) 8

The Losers 23

by Diggle & Jock; Vertigo

<=> Stuff blows up, the team makes a discovery. Rinse and repeat. Dull. To be fair, there's a glimmer of interest here as we finally get some insight into Max's plan, but it's really not enough. (KG) 3

<+> Jock returns to artistic duties as the team continues its pursuit of the truth behind the sinister Max's interests, but have they landed themselves in a situation over even their heads? Jock's grungy art is filled with even more blocks of ink, as Andy Diggle moulds his dark conspiratorial story around the action-packed antics of the rogue special ops team. (MAT) 8

The Losers 24

by Diggle & Jock; Vertigo

<=> Stuff blows up, the team makes a discovery. Rinse and repeat. Dull. In fact, the most exciting thing about this issue is the pull-out-and-keep poster for the latest Adam Sandler movie. (KG) 3

Manhunter 10

by Andreyko & Pina + Palmiotti

Ten issues in, Manhunter has proven to be a solid and reliable superhero series that never quite hits the premiere league in terms of either story or art. It has the potential to be so much more, but has yet to settle on a direction or style that is likely to give it the exposure it requires to survive long term. (RN) 6

The Question 6

by Veitch & Edwards

<=> Cloaked by his mystic powers, the enigmatic investigator Vic Sage confronts Minos and his heavily armed squadron of Subterraneans. Of course, his more ruthless methods don't sit well with the Big Blue, but neither do his feelings for fellow reporter Lois Lane. Rick Veitch's brilliantly subtle updating of the Charlton character may be in league with Alan Moore's own attempt, however Tommy Lee Edwards' computer-enhanced artwork is just as noteworthy. (MAT) 8

Seven Soldiers: The Manhattan Guardian 2

by Morrison & Stewart

<=> Grant Morrison can come up with some brilliant concepts from time to time, and rival gangs of pirates in the subway system, riding trains instead of ships is one of them. Although the subterranean 'world beneath our own' sounds similar in concept to Neil Gaiman's **Neverwhere**, Morrison's take on it is better. My only criticism: it's a concept that deserves a longer story than just two issues out of four. (RN) 7

<+> Another wildly imaginative adventure as the newspaper-sponsored hero is dragged into the depths of New York's subway system as the hobo-pirates search for a fabled treasure. There's little doubting Morrison aims to hark back to more innocent times with this title, but it's the means by which he does it that make the title stand out. With a complete lack of cynicism or "grittiness", yet free-wheeling inventiveness, Morrison achieves what Busiek and Waid only strive for. Cameron Stewart's naïve artwork suits this tone pleasingly. (MAT) 8

Shining Knight 2

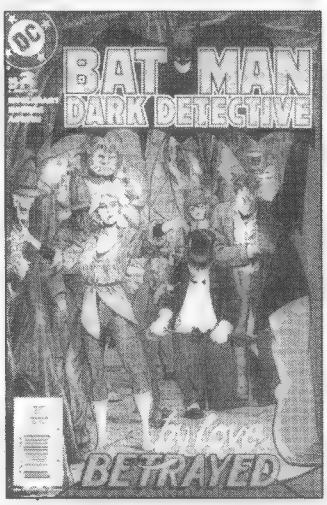
by Morrison & Bianchi

<=> Traditional Grant Morrison 'weirdness' is balanced nicely here with consistent storytelling, proving that when he gets the mix right, he not only tells a good story, but an evocatively styled one as well. The blend of Dark Age characters and alien science/faerie aspects works well and seems to link solidly to the prequel. While I can't yet see where this is all going, I can see there is a connection, and I'll take the rest on faith. Dramatic art with excellent use of colour adds to a solid and reliable miniseries. (RN) 7

Solo 4

by Chaykin

<=> The iconoclastic comics creator Howard Chaykin takes up the spotlight, showing his flair for a clever story with twist endings and his unmistakably bold linework. In a series of smart tales, Chaykin moves from a jazz musician on the run from Nazis, *Twilight*

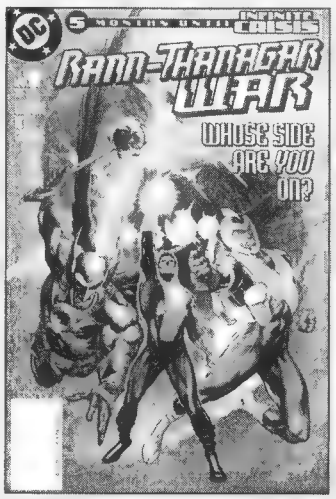


Batman: Dark Detective 2

by Englehart & Rogers + Austin

<=> I missed out on the original writer/artist run so I looked forward to this with interest. But what's on offer is substandard fare indeed. It's back to basics, with run of the mill art and simple storytelling that wouldn't even look good as a fill-in issue of the regular series. Obviously some styles don't date well and so this is frankly a waste of your hard-earned money. As disappointing as **The Dark Knight Strikes Again**, but cheaper. (RN) 4

It's been a while since The Joker was written with such conviction, while the Bruce/Batman dichotomy is nicely played. Bruce invites Silver St Cloud into the Batcave, so that she may know the two halves of the man and, by extension, the face behind the mask. This is nicely undercut with an early cameo by Two Face. The Scarecrow's fear gas attack while there allows us to further see into the mind of a man who finds it hard to trust, but with an end result that brings us full circle. Marshall Rogers, Terry Austin and John Workman continue to push all the right buttons graphically, and in one panel give us a Bruce that is positively Ditko-esque in his despair. (TS) 8



Rann Thanagar War 1

by Gibbons & Reis + Campos

Adam Strange seeks to convince Hawkman and Hawkgirl to help prevent a catastrophic galactic war. Narrowly avoiding the kind of inane space opera typical of US pop culture, a very capable Dave Gibbons creditably delivers a tight, pacy script marred only slightly by the whiff of cheesy dialogue that is the hallmark of the traditional comicbook writer. Extravagant, illustrative visuals depict the cinematic spectacle of alien battlefields, but the operatic plot may perhaps be a tad inaccessible to those unfamiliar with the dynamics of the DC universe. (JE) 7

Subtitled, 'Whose side are you on?' Well, that's a tough call as the Thanagarians are the aliens most likely to adopt Nazi uniforms for their casual dress-down days at the office, and the Rann lot are definitely the 'race that taste forgot' when it comes to their Buck Rogers-style clothes and architecture. Personally I'd opt to build a hyperspace bypass through the entire system and call it a draw. But that aside, this looks like a worthy sequel to the **Adam Strange** miniseries. (RN) 7

Zone-style sci-fi and cowboys in Hollywood to a more personal autobiographical account of early attempts to break into the comics industry. Another sterling example of the title's remit to highlight creators' talents. (MAT) 7

Superman/Batman 19

by Loeb & Churchill

<+> I was predisposed to disliking the new Supergirl's spotlight this issue, considering the complete hash Jeph Loeb (with partner in crime Michael Turner) made of her introduction a few short months ago, but I'm forced to report that Loeb turns in an enjoyable script, while Ian Churchill's art, although a tad exploitative, is energetic and fun. The new Supergirl, under the oppressive watch of her older cousin, strikes out on her own and shows us, and him, that she's not just a pretty naval-bearing teeny. It bodes well for the forthcoming **Supergirl** series. (TS) 6

Swamp Thing 15

by Dysart & Breccia; Vertigo

<=> A delusional figure from Swamp Thing's human past arrives with visions of a sinister menace to the muck monster's domain. It's quite apt that Enrique Breccia returns this issue, as his hallucinatory designs and scratchy linework are perfect at capturing Joshua Dysart's disturbing themes. Dysart's scripts are slowly evolving, with overriding themes of the disrupted balance in nature and the elemental's role in healing it. (MAT) 7

Teen Titans 24

by Johns & Clerk + Thibert

<+> Geoff Johns' unobtrusive, low-key writing style allows the story, via the artwork, to unfold with near cinematic perfection. All the dialogue is in the right place and at the right time and it doesn't get in the way or fumble the plot. It doesn't so much need reading as looking at. And that's not a criticism, just an observation of the near-perfect symbiosis of carefully chosen, carefully placed words and disciplined art. (SH) 8

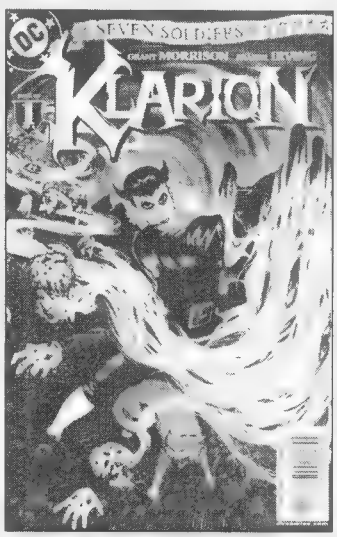
Villains United 1

by Simone & Eaglesham

This read like a wet weekend in Blackpool. The trouble starts with the usually dependable Gail Simone's flip tone, and never really

Seven Soldiers: Klarion The Witch Boy 1

by Morrison & Irving



Witch boy Klarion rebels against his oppressive society, perhaps a moment too late. Amazingly well scripted and beautifully drawn, this biting satire is both interesting and entertaining, and the protagonist is a wonderfully complex character. The best *Seven Soldiers* mini yet. (KG) 9

Grant Morrison appropriates another character from the DC archives for his interconnected miniseries epic, as inquisitive anti-authoritarian Klarion questions his people's need to resurrect their dead to work in the mines. Morrison is at his more comical here, playfully satirising unquestioning, god-fearing puritans. While Frazer Irving's stylishly gothic artwork exorcises all memories of his previous lacklustre.US work with his fully realised **Fungus the Bogieman**-type underworld and Marilyn Manson-esque characters. (MAT) 8

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pulls itself out of the smart repartee quagmire she lands it in. The Fiddler gets offed by his Secret Six buddies, so they recruit the new, improved Catman, whose special abilities seem restricted to looking buff in a loin-cloth. Strangely, Talia and Dr Psycho try to recruit him first for their 'Society' despite thinking of him as a buffoon. Eh? Dale Eaglesham produces some very good art here. Fingers crossed that Simon can pull this together fast. (TS) 5

Marvel

Amazing Fantasy 8

by Van Lente & Kirk + Conrad + Glapion

There's that unmistakable aroma of cliché in the air. The Scorpion has the most hackneyed past and present possible. And, judging by Fred Van Lante's storytelling, his future looks no rosier I'll spare you the details; just think spy caper. From such a bland story I would have hoped the art would do a little jaywalking, but unfortunately, it only functions to maintain the status quo. One for Barnsley Council's recycling operation I feel. (SH) 2

Amazing Spider-Man 520

by Straczynski & Deodato Jr + Pimentel

<=> The New Avengers battle Hydra's new superteam, but all is not as it seems. Good solid superheroics, but there's really not enough emphasis on Spidey in his own title, and this just reads like a New Avengers story. Good stuff, but in the wrong book. (KG) 7

Astonishing X-Men 10

by Whedon & Cassaday

<-> The newly awakened Danger Room smacks the X-Men about a bit, then heads off to Genosha to kill Xavier. The ridiculous premise is further hampered by a number of glaring plot holes and inane scripting, with only the art showing a glimmer of this title's early promise. Disappointing. (KG) 5

<-> Fighting Dangergirl, a sentient and murderous evolution of the Danger Room, occupies the whole issue, and despite Xavier's demonic cover image he's a cameo this issue. There's too much unexplained during the lively battle for the plot to satisfy, such as why Kitty doesn't disrupt Dangergirl when phasing through her, or why Dangergirl lets Emma temporarily escape. But a number of impeccably written flashes compensate. John Cassaday's art can look fetching but fluffs several key scenes by inadequately depicting the script, leading to unnecessary confusion. (IM) 5

Black Panther 4

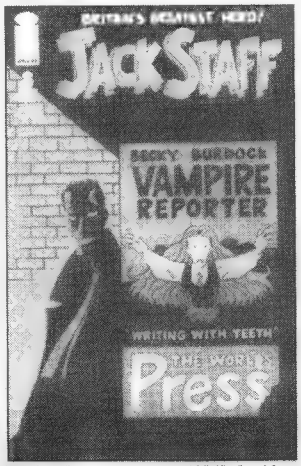
by Hudlin & Romita Jr + Janson; Marvel Knights

<=> Reaction has been mixed to this title, but on the whole it works for me. Criticisms that the comic is a platform for 'black power' sentiments don't really stand up to close scrutiny. While the writing style isn't especially subtle when it covers the subject of past imperialism in Africa, it's a valid enough topic considering the background of the book. Recasting the Black Knight as some Opus Dei-like present day Crusader is a particularly nice touch that breathes life back into a C-list superhero who was never really handled properly before. (RN) 7

Image

Jack Staff 8

by Grist & Conlan



<=> More masterful writing as the many subplots are developed and even more questions are left in their wake. There's certainly more of a long-term feel to the plotting here, but at no point does the storytelling lose focus. The art is of the usual top quality, with new colourist Craig Conlan ably stepping in to fill Phil Elliot's shoes. (KG) 9

<=> It's too easy to sound like a scratched record praising Paul Grist's naïve linework, clever page layouts, deceptively simple storytelling techniques and skill at revitalising the icons and clichés of superhero comics. But with every issue he manages to achieve this and makes it seem so easy. While harking back to simpler times, yet able to appeal to a genuinely all-age readership, Grist makes this reviewer's job a simple one: everyone should buy this. (MAT) 8

Daredevil 72

by Bendis & Maleev; Marvel Knights

<-> In *Honour Your Mother and Father* Archie's dad, the bomber from Frank Miller's excellent *Born Again*, asks him to blow up Foggy Nelson. Will the son repeat the sins of the father? Brian Michael Bendis skilfully weaves the seminal tale into the present, pleasing continuity supporters without obstructing new readers. Alex Maleev's father-son exchanges look as desperate as they read and Dave Stewart's colours heighten all the key scenes, while Bendis's lightly emphasised emotional pay-off is a subdued and poignant finale. (IM) 7

<=> Adjusting the storyline's focus away from Matt Murdock, Bendis examines the effects his reign as Kingpin had on ordinary citizens and low-level criminals of Hells Kitchen. With this episode Bendis returns to the paternal relationship, as a susceptible son aims to appease his imprisoned father by carrying out his brutal wishes. Although a slightly passé theme, Bendis lifts it with his usual style and spin, and Maleev's grimy art effortlessly carries the emotional weight of the script. (MAT) 9

Daredevil 73

by Bendis & Maleev; Knights

<=> The latest DD run builds on the premise of our devilish hero as a mythological figure in the manner of the Batman. As the inhabitants of Hell's Kitchen meet in a church to discuss their fleeting glimpses and experiences of Matt's alter ego, we get a Canterbury Tales series of morality stories that touches the lives of everyone around him. If this is the final or penultimate story arc of the Bendis run then it is a perfect way to bow out. (RN) 8

Exiles 64

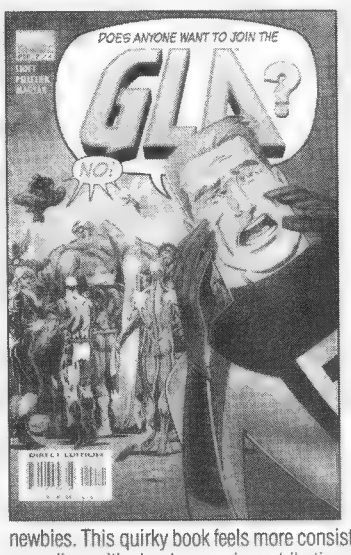
by Bedard & Sakakibera

Superheroes and time travel should not mix – it's far too clichéd! Tony Bedard, however, delivers successfully on both counts with a captivating story that defies the inherent formulaic subject matter. Mizuki Sakakibera's art is about story progress, rather than dazzling panel pyrotechnics; working for, rather than against the story. OK, there's the obvious X in the title but don't let that put you off completely. (SH) 7

Livewires 3

by Warren & Mays + Martin

<=> Although having guest appearances by such Marvel trade marks as Sentinels, AIM scientists and Maanites, this miniseries is pure Adam Warren, full of his usual play of technology, mecha, witty dialogue and cheeky teenage characters. The robotic team of Black Ops hits paydirt, uncovering links to the "Big Kahuna" during a routine espionage on the government's Sentinel program. Rick Mays' cutesy art mimics Warren's style well enough, but doesn't have the detail of the original Ameri-manga artist. (MAT) 7



GLA 2

by Slott & Pelletier + Magyar

I know I bemoan the referential state of some comics and how the whole medium's on the verge of disappearing up its own spandex. But **GLA** is the sardonic and satirical dose of Epson salts that the genre needs. It punctures, without mercy, the pomposity that surrounds iconic superheroes, and I find myself laughing hysterically all the way to the advanced ordering form for the next two issues. (SH) 7

<+> With Dinah dead and Mr Immortal wallowing in grief listening to Aimee Mann, what are the GLA to do? Recruit some new members! After a former West Coast Avenger 'comes out' thinking they're the Gay/Lesbian Alliance, Squirrel Girl and Grasshopper sign up as newbies. This quirky book feels more consistent with its second issue, and thus more rewarding, with classic comedy contributions from 'Monkey Joe Says' and a timely dig at a recent, controversial **Wolverine** killing scene. (IM) 7

New Avengers 5

by Bendis & Finch + Miki + D'Armata

<+> The team catches up with its quarry, although not in the way they expected. This remains a fun read, with the pretentiousness and faux-gritty feel of **Avengers Disassembled** abandoned in favour of solid old-fashioned superheroics. David Finch's art is still a bit inconsistent, but on the whole this is a return to form for the Avengers. (KG) 8

<=> Much has been made about a return to old-fashioned, fun superheroics by the big publishers, so it's quite a surprise to see Nu-Marvel mainstay Brian Michael Bendis leading the way with this title. This issue, a Wolverine team-up, sees the revitalised group battle dinosaurs, primates and mutants in The Savage Land, but also depicts them in the buff. Finch may cheat a little duplicating panels and recycling the same heads, but his slick, detailed and muscular art is perfectly suited to this style of heroics. (MAT) 7

New Avengers 6

by Bendis & Finch + Miki + D'Armata

<-> A sleep-inducing mutate conveniently allows Sauron to capture the Avengers. While Brian Michael Bendis pens generally snappy dialogue, an entertaining Spiderwoman/Wolverine scene, and an unexpected 90degree plot turn, other plot devices feel contrived and one or two lines fall flat. My disdain for David Finch's glossy, heartless art is on record, and little impresses me here beyond Spiderwoman's silky-looking hair. A book's struggling when my burning question is 'where does she buy her conditioner?' (IM) 5

Supreme Power 16

by Straczynski & Frank + Sibal; MAX Comics

<+> The army undermines Hyperion's good name to bring him back under its influence, Mark's foster dad decides to tell a journalist Mark's an alien, and Joe reaches out to fish-girl Kingsley – all in the name of PR. J. Michael Straczynski's tale slowly gathers pace and while the plot is drawn out it's brightened by decent character pieces. Gary Frank's art plays to its strengths, especially when portraying a rainbow-dazzling Joe. Solid. (IM) 6

<=> Another ponderous issue as the US establishment attempts to rail in the superpowers by discrediting Hyperion, meanwhile Green Lan... err Doctor Spectrum takes the naked water-babe from her natural environment. There's no doubting Straczynski's ability to tell a good character-based storyline, but for a superhero comic this is too drawn out to be appreciated as a monthly. Frank's dynamic art may suit the spandex crowd, but his figures look emaciated in mufti. (MAT) 6

Ultimate Secret 2

by Ellis & McNiven + Morales

<- -> Thanks to Steve McNiven and Mark

Young Avengers 4

by Heinberg & Cheung + Dell + Geraci

<+++> Allan Heinberg's dialogue is right on the money! Its realism inside the superhero medium, where the wooden usually vies with the stilted, has to be commended. All this is rounded off with exemplary art and dynamic panel progression from Jim Cheung and John Dell. So, two things to note, for both would-be and established writers, here is a lesson in how to write and how to plot, comics. Inwardly digest.'Nuff said! (SH) 8

<+> As huge, delightful surprises emerge about the YA – especially Hulkling – Kang alternately attempts to bully and persuade Cap and Iron Man to let him run off to the future with Iron Lad – and seems to succeed. Heinberg's writing is excellent, taking unexpected but appropriate turns and consistently showing strong female characters who refuse to be victims. The art looks lovely on the big set-pieces but occasionally Cheung struggles to match this on the smaller panels – a weakness balanced by some refreshingly chilled inks. (IM) 8

Morales art, this is easy and engrossing on the eye, with the exception of the debriefing middle section, where the pair seem to opt for hacking it out. But it does pick back up with the FF sequence. Warren Ellis's story, on the other hand, trudges along, with stock characterisations and mediocre routines. A disappointment. (SH) 4

US Indies

Free Comic Book Day: Bone Sharps, Cowboys and The Thunder Lizards

by various; GT Labs

Critically acclaimed writer Jim Ottaviani has found a niche bringing the wonder of science biography to comics. Where previously he has concentrated on 20th-century achievements, this sampler given away during FCBD sees him turning his attentions to the emerging science of palaeontology in North America and the various unscrupulous characters surrounding the field. Artists Zander and Kevin Cannon and Shad Petosky appear indebted to Chester Brown's *Louis Riel*, but take a less standoffish approach to events. This certainly bodes well for the upcoming series. (MAT) 8

Free Comic Book Day: Comic Festival

by various; Fantagraphics

Within the attractive Darwyn Cooke cover, an inevitably mixed bag of artists are collected for this FCBD promotion of the Toronto Comic Arts Festival. Although established stars Seth, Cameron Stewart, Chester Brown and Dave Sim are given space to preview upcoming work, lesser-known creators are given equal footing such as the puke-obsessed Steven Manale, laid-back Rob Coughler and the deadpan Jason Pultz. With such talent, you'll be wishing for free plane tickets to take you to Canada. (MAT) 7

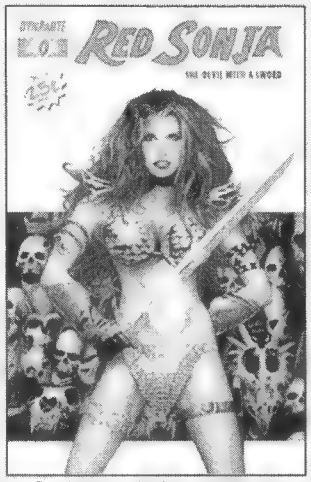
Free Comic Book Day: The Fantagraphics Funny Book

by various; Fantagraphics

Fantagraphics has previously placed itself aloof of crass commerciality and FCBD's "team comics" mentality, but this year compiles a sampler of the wealth of talent it has published. The usual suspects are found

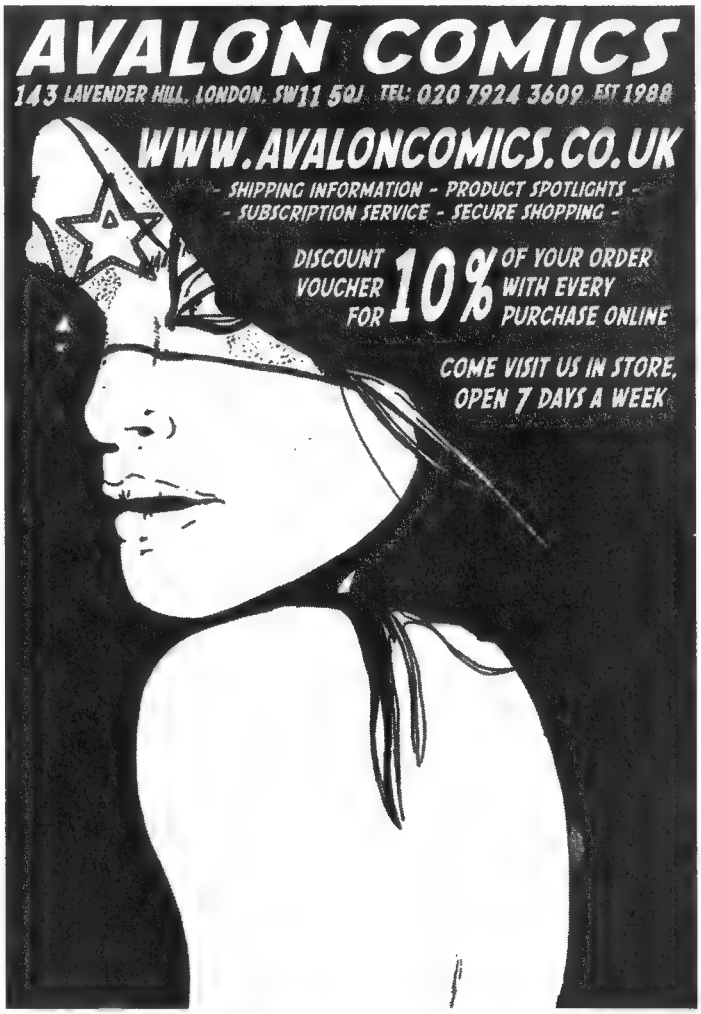
Red Sonja 0

by Oeming + Carey & Rubi + Rodriguez + Isanove; Dynamite Entertainment



Sonja encounters corruption in a small village. Preview or not, the creative team should have been able to do a better job than this. The art is inconsistent in quality and dubious in tone, and the slight plot is accompanied by woefully inadequate characterisation. An utter failure of an introduction to Sonja and her world. (KG) 4

The REH minor character from the non-Conan story, *Shadow of the Vulture*, gets her own relaunch, presumably on the back of the success of Dark Horse's **Conan** series. The issue zero teaser doesn't really impress in the way that **Conan** #0 did, but with Mike Carey on board to provide plot outlines for Michael Avon Oeming to script from, we can expect some consistently logical stories and characters. Sadly, the ridiculous chain mail bikini from the Frank Thorne-era Marvel comic remains. Give her some proper armour for God's sake! Barry Smith managed it. (RN) 6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within: the scathing Dan Clowes, Peter Bagge's syndicated *Bat Boy*, and Ivan Brunetti informing us how to draw cartoons, while Los Bros Hernandez rightly dominate a third of the comic. Marc Bell previews his delightfully lively *Worn Tuff Elbow*, while Sophie Crumb's painfully honest strip illustrates that her indebtedness to her famous parents may be no bad thing. (MAT) 8

UK Indies

Bulldog: Empire 1

by Cobley & Cameron;
Albion Comics

After a long conflict, Blighty is at peace, but there are new threats on the horizon. Excellent production values and fabulous art immediately catch the eye, but it's the understated yet intelligent writing that really stands out. (KG) 9

Strangehaven 17

by Millidge; Abiogenesis Press

<=> Although he spends a long time groveiling for the acknowledged lateness of the issue, it's hard to begrudge Gary Spencer Millidge's tardiness when he produces such consistently excellent work. After the romantic mystery of the last year's instalment, Millidge introduces forces for good to the bizarre West Country village, while scheming housewife Maureen goes to increasingly desperate lengths to dispose of her husband. Millidge's painterly photo-referenced style has all the detail and little of the stiffness similar artists encounter. (MAT) 8

UK Newsstand

Astonishing Spider-Man 126

by various; Panini UK

Spider-Man (literally) unravels the mystery of Digger, although one has to question Peter's decision to leave the recently returned MJ in bed while he goes "on patrol"... Duh! *The Death of Jean DeWolff* begins, a welcome reminder that shocking and thought-provoking Spider-Man stories existed long before J. Michael Straczynski. Essential reading. (KM) 8

Avengers United 53

by various; Panini UK

The Avengers present a new line-up and the US government starts to play dirty. Geoff Johns convincingly plays off the tensions between Iron Man/Black Panther and Jack of Hearts/Ant-Man, while The Falcon makes a welcome return. Gary Frank's art suits **Supreme Power** but looks slightly uncomfortable here. (KM) 7

Doctor Who Magazine 357

by Roberts & Collins + Roach;
Panini UK

<=> *The Love Invasion* concludes in suitably humorous fashion. Like episodes from the TV series, the brevity of the story makes you want for more and the comedy is perhaps handled more successfully than the drama, but a great read nevertheless. Now, I wonder how they're getting on with drawing David Tennant's likeness. (KM) 7

Essential X-Men 126

by various; Panini UK

"Chris Claremont delivers the issue's best story" shock! Salvador Larocca's art is another winner despite a cover that, at first glance, suggests that Emma Frost has a tail, and interior pages depicting a Jordan-esque Storm! Grant Morrison's insightful take on The Beast offsets the hideous visual makeover although his latest antagonist, Quentin Quire, fails to immediately impress. (KM) 6

Judge Dredd The Megazine 232

by various; Rebellion

<+> There's Carlos Ezquerra's superb artwork and some great Scots vernacular in *Judge Dredd* as another of P.J. Maybe's *Monsterus Mashinashuns* comes into play. *Devlin Waugh* is beset by ninja animal spirits. Lost South American judges run from giant mosquitoes in *Zancudo*. Other strips include *Johnny Woo*, *The Bogie Man*, *Anderson: Psi-Division* and the reprint *Curse of the Spider-Woman*. Text features include a Bryan Talbot interview and an article on *Sexton Blake*. (DK) 8

Marvel Rampage 8

by various; Panini UK

<-> Another surprise guest creator this issue, as Roger Stern writes an entertaining Spider-Man/Vulture tale. The Avengers story, featuring Dr Strange and Nightmare, disappointingly echoes the strip – also written by Ferg Handley – that appeared in last month's **Spectacular Spider-Man** #115. Extensive features on *Revenge of the Sith* fill out the issue. (KM) 6

2000 AD Progs 1424-1427

by various; Rebellion

<-> *Judge Dredd* and *The VCs* feature alongside *Slaine*, whose adventures are much more gripping when he returns from the Goddess's dimension restored to his former glory one minute, and becoming something akin to an iron age Witchfinder General the next. *Bec & Kawl* has a few good jokes in there somewhere, so it's worth a look. *American Gothic*, which runs to a mere eight parts, looks like a missed opportunity. (DK) 7

Small Press

Fist Fight 1

by Gray;
£2.25 from D. Gray
www.fist-fight.com

David Gray's charming 16-page booklet with a colour cardstock cover contains six enjoyable cartoon strips. *Chinchoo in Robot Love*, is about an undervalued and unappreciated robot housekeeper. *The Wilson Brothers in The Case of the Conjoined Caper*, concerns Siamese twins whose lives are complicated by their pursuit of diametrically opposed careers. The artist/writer's great facility with cartooning is in evidence throughout. (DK) 9

FutureQuake 4

by various;
£4.50 from D. Evans
whistlerstrip@gmail.com

<=> With 48 pages, this issue boasts nine multi-page and five one-page strips and art contributions from industry professionals Arthur Ranson, Stewart McKenny, Inaki Miranda and Eva de la Cruz, as well as published authors and other overseas contributors. There are some striking strips concerning the fate of alien abductees, how unfunded superheroes support themselves, the burden of bureaucracy on crime fighters, and a breakthrough in temporal research. (DK) 7

The O Men 27

by Eden; Ominous Comics
£1.50 from 11a Gatestone Road
Upper Norwood, London SE19 3AT

And so Martin Eden's grand superhero soap opera comes to a climax that is easily far more exciting, entertaining, poignant and meaningful than any of the 'big' events forced upon us by major publishing companies. This is how *Avengers Disassembled* should have read. (KG) 9

Omnivistascope

by Scott & various;
£5.99 from P. Scott, 13 Kiln Crescent
Bishop Middleham, Ferryhill
County Durham DL17 9AP

In this resplendent self-published sci-fi anthology, writer Paul Scott and some of the most prolific and talented UK small press artists present 10 visions of the future, all of them dystopian. Ian Stacy illustrates the hilarious adventures of *Dirk Despair*, a chronically torpid and melancholy pulp space hero. *54 Jones* is just a number, safeguarding the sewers in a strip drawn by Matt Timson. **Omnivistascope** is a square-bound, 68-page worthwhile read. (DK) 9

Pony School

by Berridge & Coyle;
Death Camp Jones Productions
£2 from E. Berridge
ponyschool@gmail.com

Teenager Penny Ryder is both an equestrian in training and a British intelligence agent. Writer Ed Berridge and artist Brian Coyle have created something very slick-looking in their 32-page A4 comic. The story, an immaculate pastiche of pony stories for girls and cold war spy thrillers is perfectly paced, gripping and dynamically illustrated with obvious enthusiasm and considerable talent. **Pony School** is everything a small press comic should be. (DK) 9

Short Stories 1

by Short;
£2 from J. Short, 20 Grants Avenue
Bournemouth BH1 4NR

John Short's 32-page colour covered comic is an A5 anthology with four strips, drawn by Stephen Prestwood, Neil Edwards, Andy Nixon and Craig John. The *X-Men* and *Star Wars* fan strips, both drawn by Prestwood, are excellent. *Parallel Minds*, John Short's own creation, shows great promise as a non-superhero strip about psychic college students. *The Return of Octobriana* has the 'Russian She-Devil' at large after 28 years' incarceration. (DK) 8

Solar Wind 5

by various;
£4 from P. Scott, 13 Kiln Crescent
Bishop Middleham, Ferryhill
County Durham DL17 9AP

<--> Following the template of the sales-consolidating strategy of 1970s comics publishers, **Solar Wind** merges with **House of Fright** this issue. *Vault of Video Nasties* visualises such hypothetical uncertificated movies as *Hounds of the Ripper* via comic strips. *The Gun That Kills* is a wry spoof of the haunted item formula. Perhaps surprisingly, *Dracula, Undead Detective* works perfectly and hits the target as a nice bit of writing. (DK) 7

Stuffed

by McCool & various;
Hi8us Midlands Ltd
£2 from Hi8us Midlands Ltd
Progress Works, Heath Mill
Birmingham B9 4AL

Eleven artists training in Birmingham's StripSearch group collaborated on this journey through the dreams of eight-year old Maggie with Albert the bear. Michiru Morikawa's finely detailed toy-box-gone-mad pages resemble children's storybook illustrations influenced by Hieronymus Bosch. Jiawa He's fashion dolls sequence evokes the look of '80s Euro-Japanese animation, and Kevin Lee Bennett's heavily inked kinetic art on the hover-bike chase is on a par with that of **Gloom Cookie** artist Harley Sparx. (DK) 7

Sunny For Girls 2

by various;
£4 from P. Scott, 13 Kiln Crescent
Bishop Middleham, Ferryhill
County Durham DL17 9AP

The Ghosts of St. Glads cheerfully and uncannily spoofs the style of lightweight comedy supernatural strips. *A Pony for Paula* is a close homage to a 1970s parochial wish-fulfilment fantasy. *Luci the Goth* beautifully subverts the 'better than the bullies' cliché, and adds a great character to the roster. Elsewhere, it's nice to see **Sunny** keeping up the fine tradition of ballerinas overcoming adversity and dancing 'from the heart', too. (DK) 8

Tales of the Contrary

by Bartlett & Bolt-01;
Just Over Broke
£2 from A. Bartlett
25 Westmoreland Street
Cardiff CF5 1LU

This A4 sci-fi comic, with 20 pages of strip and a six-page text story, displays a penchant for the twist ending and poetic justice. The tales of killing, cloning and interrogation are written as if by someone who takes life very seriously. It's impressively drawn by Bolt-01, with grey tones by Richmond Clements and backgrounds that convincingly evoke the worlds in which the stories penned by Andrew Bartlett are set. (DK) 7

Zarjaz 0

by various; Underfire Comics
£1.50 from C. Dinnie
zarjazcomic@yahoo.co.uk

It's great to see **Zarjaz** back again, beautifully produced. Issue #0 features Judge Anderson by Colin Dinnie and David Gray, a glimpse into the unconscious mind of *Strontium Dog* villain Nelson Bunker Kreelman by Andrew Lewis and Nick Dyer, Judge Hershey in a tale of lewd 'jimping' by Nathan Adler and Ed Traquino, and *Uranium City Judge* by James MacKay and Geoffrey Shane. Enjoy the stories; marvel at the artwork. (DK) 9

FROM THE WORLD OF JACK STAFF... THE LATEST EPISODE IN A BRAND NEW THRILL-FILLED SERIAL!

FROM THE PAGES of JACK STAFF! BRITAIN'S GREATEST HERO!

A PAUL GRIST COMIC STRIP!

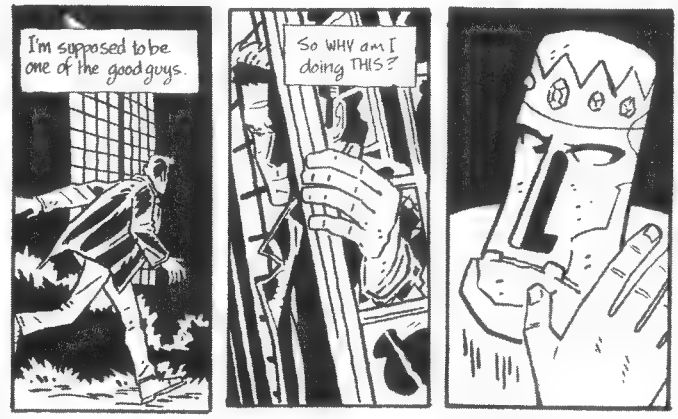
© PAUL GRIST 2005

HELEN MORGAN · BEN KULMER · HARRY CRANE

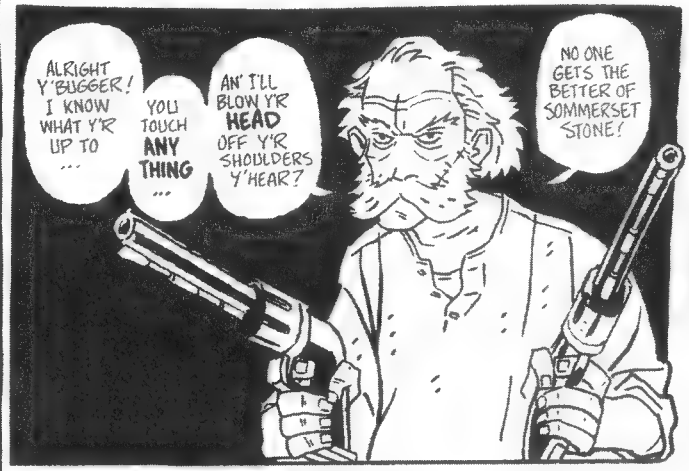
THREE UNUSUAL PEOPLE CAUGHT UP IN A WORLD WHERE THE BIZARRE IS COMMON PLACE. THEY ARE THE GUARDIANS OF THE GATE BETWEEN REALITY AND UNREALITY. THEY ARE THE INVESTIGATORS OF THE UNEXPLAINABLE. THE QUESTION MARK CRIMES. THEY ARE **Q.**

THE STORY SO FAR...

BEN KULMER USED TO BE KNOWN AS **THE CLAW.** HE USED TO BE A THIEF. SOMETIMES HE STILL IS. TONIGHT HE HAS BROKEN INTO A REMOTE COUNTRY HOUSE.



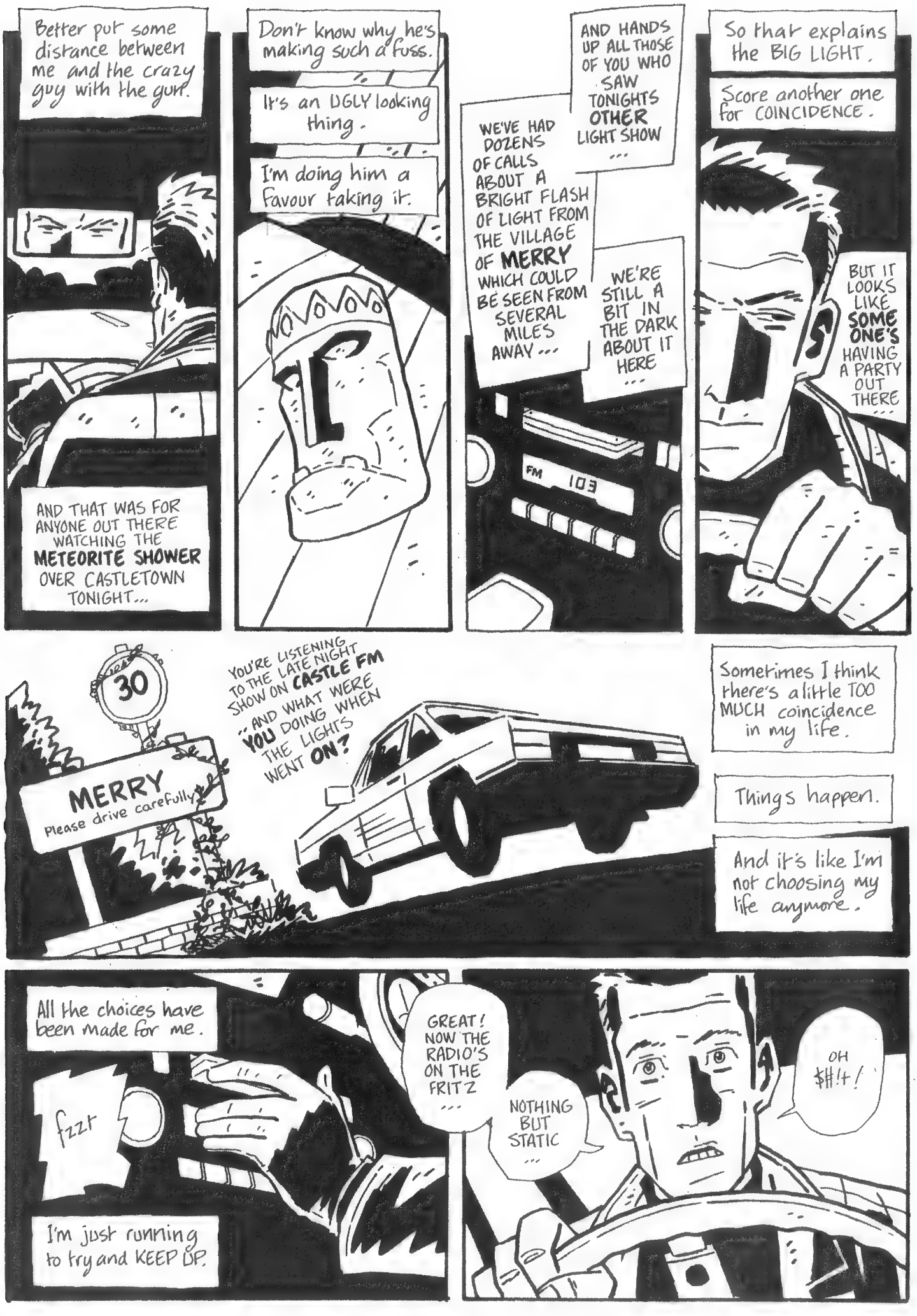
HE DISABLED THE OUTSIDE ELECTRICITY GENERATOR PLUNGING THE HOUSE INTO DARKNESS AND CUTTING OFF ANY POSSIBLE ALARMS THAT MIGHT BE SET UP. THIS HAS ALSO AROUSED THE SUSPICIONS OF THE OWNER OF THE HOUSE...


ALRIGHT Y'BUGGER! I KNOW WHAT Y'R UP TO ...
YOU TOUCH ANY THING ...
AN' I'LL BLOW YR HEAD OFF Y'R SHOULDERS Y'HEAR?
NO ONE GETS THE BETTER OF SOMMERSET STONE!

HIDING IN THE SHADOWS, KULMER BELIEVES HIMSELF SAFE - UNTIL A SUDDEN UNEXPECTED FLASH OF LIGHT FROM OUTSIDE REVEALS HIM TO THE GUN WIELDING SOMMERSET STONE.

NOW READ ON...

BLAM
BLAM
Now THAT'S illegal!
I'm running away. He's in no danger. I'm no threat.
And he's STILL shooting at me.
That's the trouble with some people.
No respect for the law.
I've a good mind to report him to the Police.
--LET THE CHILL-DREN BOOGIE
LET THE CHILDREN
BOO-GIE
VROOM
If it wasn't for that whole "burglary" thing.


Better put some distance between me and the crazy guy with the gun.
AND THAT WAS FOR ANYONE OUT THERE WATCHING THE METEORITE SHOWER OVER CASTLETOWN TONIGHT...
Don't know why he's making such a fuss.
It's an UGLY looking thing.
I'm doing him a favour taking it.
WE'VE HAD DOZENS OF CALLS ABOUT A BRIGHT FLASH OF LIGHT FROM THE VILLAGE OF MERRY WHICH COULD BE SEEN FROM SEVERAL MILES AWAY...
AND HANDS UP ALL THOSE OF YOU WHO SAW TONIGHTS OTHER LIGHT SHOW...
WE'RE STILL A BIT IN THE DARK ABOUT IT HERE...
FM 103
So that explains the BIG LIGHT.
Score another one for COINCIDENCE.
BUT IT LOOKS LIKE SOME ONE'S HAVING A PARTY OUT THERE...
30
MERRY
Please drive carefully
YOU'RE LISTENING TO THE LATE NIGHT SHOW ON CASTLE FM ..AND WHAT WERE YOU DOING WHEN THE LIGHTS WENT ON?
Sometimes I think there's a little TOO MUCH coincidence in my life.
Things happen.
And it's like I'm not choosing my life anymore.
All the choices have been made for me.
fzzt
I'm just running to try and KEEP UP.
GREAT! NOW THE RADIO'S ON THE FRITZ...
NOTHING BUT STATIC...
OH $#!+!

COULD THIS BE THE END OF THE ROAD FOR BEN KULMER? DON'T MISS NEXT MONTH'S THRILLING EPISODE!

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Letters

CI, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (editorial@comicsinternational.com)

Jack Staff

Peter Sidebotham
Congleton, Cheshire

MANY thanks for the *Jack Staff* pages (#186), which is a perfect British strip to showcase in **Comics International**.

I hope it's a permanent fixture, but how about a few more pages?

It's a 12-issue serial, how permanent's that? The page count isn't set to increase though, time and space constraints, I'm afraid. ...Dez

John Brosnan

Paul Richmond, Newcastle on Tyne

IT WAS with great sadness that I read of John Brosnan's death (**CI** #185).

As an avid young reader of **House of Hammer** and early **Starbursts**, I enjoyed Brosnan's writings immensely. He was my favourite reviewer in those fondly remembered publications: always informative and always very funny.

I can still remember laughing out loud at his review of an Italian zombie film called *The Living Dead at the Manchester Morgue*... Having since seen that movie I can say with certainty that his review was a lot more entertaining!

Thanks for all those wonderful reviews, John, and for **The Horror People** (for me, the best book on horror cinema and its stars).

Your writing cheered and inspired me no end as a youngster, and I'm sure there are many horror/SF fans of my generation who would say exactly the same!

David Robinson, Peterborough

I WAS sorry to hear of the death of John Brosnan. I well remember his critique of *The Empire Strikes Back* in **Starburst** in 1980. It was in-depth and well thought out.

As a kid, it introduced me to the idea one could love a movie and still be critical of it. In fact one had to be in order to really appreciate it.

I don't know how long he wrote for; but his *It's Only a Movie* column was still appearing when I picked up a copy of **Starburst** again in 1999.

Funnily enough, this time he was expressing his doubts about *The Phantom Menace*, contrary to the media frenzy concerning that movie.

Also in #185: The inclusion of comics is long overdue and Paul Grist is a great addition to the magazine.

Lastly, I was pleased to read that Doomlord has been collected. As an **Eagle** fan, I will definitely order it!

British superheroes

Tim Rogerson
92 Abbott Rd, Didcot, Oxon OX11 8HZ

READING the reply in *Q&A* #183 regarding old British superheroes sent me on a semi-ecstatic trip of nauseating nostalgia of my own warped youth.

It set me to thinking just how dodgy some of the homegrown heroes really were. I mean, would you trust a mentally retarded robot with a short sword, as with Robot Archie? I think not! No wonder he ended up on acid!

I also remember Rubberman; but why Mr Fantastic didn't take him to court for breach of copyright, I don't know! It also brought to mind less memorable bods such as Strongman, a blond Arnie-type from a **Fantastic** annual and Captain Hornet, another minor league attempt at US brilliance!

My favourites, though, have to be Gadgetman and Gimmick-kid, an iffy pairing of over-the-top superheroes. Let's face it, they were as camp as a row of tents. And I loved it!

I can't remember what comic they were in – perhaps someone could fill me in on this? – but my kid brother had an annual which featured a four-page colour story of the flamboyant fops, fighting Morlock-type aliens.

Perhaps you could get readers to vote for their all-time favourite British supercharacter. They could give their own personal reason for doing so. The winner could receive something exotic, like a signed pair of Captain Hurricane's pants!

An intoxicating concept, Tim.

*For your info, Gadget Man and Gimmick-Kid (**Lion**, 1968) were drawn by Geoff Campion, who really should have known better. Superman creator Jerry Siegel, having latched on to British comics with the Spider, was responsible for the idea. Sad how he ended up.*

Even I rejected one of his on-spec ideas a few years later, Sgt Space of the Space Cops or somesuch. But then, somebody who'd created an American icon shouldn't have had to graft in his autumn years.

Graphic novels

Comment by Aaron Probets
via e-mail: aaronprobets@hotmail.com

I WAS flicking through **CI** #183 and saw the letter from Paul Dale Roberts saying how he'd like to see more foreign comics discussed and reviewed and it reminded me of the comment some issues ago about the French comics convention, which in turn reminded me of a graphic novel I purchased a while ago and whose sequel I was looking into buying just the previous night.

It was called **Blacksad** and was a wonderfully drawn piece of anthropomorphic comic noir about a panther detective trying to solve a case. Now, I realise that French, Italian and Spanish comics are not readily available in the UK – the reason for **CI**'s lack of coverage. However, I bought this graphic novel in a book store in Wimbledon and have since seen it in several other shops. I don't recall ever hearing anything about it in **CI** despite it only being published in 2000 with a sequel already out.

I understand that the recent addition of Paul Gravett's graphic novel section might cover books like this in the future but would it hurt to have a few reviews of graphic novels in the reviews section? **CI** already covers UK Newsstand and more often than not these are simply reprints of Marvel/DC comics.

I think it would help the comics community discover some gems, especially now that graphic novels are selling so well *(Sez Dez,* #183).

Sticking with coverage, any chance of highlighting comics that have received particularly good reviews recently in an extended section? I don't mean big sellers like **X-Men** or **Superman** but ones that are really good but slipping towards the cancellation line.

Such a feature might help to get them new readers and save them from cancellation (**Captain Marvel** is one that springs to mind).

A noble if impractical thought, Aaron. If a score of 9 doesn't alert readers, a wordy piece on something they're not reading isn't likely to be more than a flip page, I'd say.

*As for iBooks' **Blacksad**, it's American, so it should have been in our news pages. So you know, book three is due in August. Its ISBN is 0743498380, if that helps.*

Panel Beaters

Rob Cox via e-mail:
robert.cox40@ntlworld.com

I WAS thrilled to see the article on Eric Bradbury in *Panel Beaters* (**CI** #185). I really do love his artwork and was saddened to hear of his death through *Sez Dez*, when Dez was mentioning that he had to clear out his telephone book of people he could no longer call (I think! This was ages ago). Another great loss to British comics.

Saying that, I see from your article that Eric has been dead for 10 years now.

For me at least, the impact of finding out was not lessened by the amount of time that had passed.

Mike Kazybrid's COMIC CUTS

Script by Sarah Sier

WALLOP!!!
MIC APPEARS TO BE IN A MAD RUSH. HAS IT ANYTHING TO DO WITH HIS LATEST BUSINESS VENTURE ?
YOU MEAN SCAM, CONFIDENCE TRICK, SWINDLE... TAKE YOUR PICK !!
KAZYBRID
MIC BUFF'S COMICS
I DID TRY TO EXPLAIN TO HIM THAT A BLANK SHEET OF GLOSS PAPER DOESN'T CONSTITUTE A POSTER SHOWING THE INVISIBLE WOMAN DISPLAYING HER POWERS !!

Send your script ideas to the above address and you receive the original art if yours is published.

Please note: All scripts are submitted on the understanding they become the copyright property of Kazybrid, Skinn and Comics International.

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An at-a-glance reference guide to everything that counts in comics

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Neal Adams ..... www.nealadams.com
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Brian Bolland Art ..... www.velouria.com/Bolland
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Drawn and Quarterly ..... www.drawnandquarterly.com
Dynamic Forces ..... www.dynamicforces.com
Fantagraphics ..... www.fantagraphics.com
Harris Comics ..... www.vampirella.com
Heavy Metal ..... www.heavymetal.com
Knockabout Comics ..... www.knockabout.com
Marvel Comics ..... www.marvel.com
Northern Lightz ..... www.northernlightz.com
Oni Press ..... www.onipress.com
Pulp Theatre ..... www.pulptheatre.com
Quality/Warrior ..... www.comicsinternational.com
Sirius Entertainment www.sirius.choiceoneonline.com
Todd McFarlane Productions ..... www.spawn.com
Top Cow Comics ..... www.topcow.com
TwoMorrows ..... www.twomorrows.com
2000 AD www.2000ADonline.com
Viz (USA) ..... www.viz.com
Viz (UK) ..... www.viz.co.uk
WildStorm Comics ..... www.wildstorm.com

Manga and anime

AD Vision ..... www.advfilms.com
MVM ..... www.mvm-uk.co.uk

OTAKU.CO.UK
Secure online shopping for the latest anime, manga and game collectables direct from Japan ..... www.otaku.co.uk

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On-line auctions

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Ten successful years specialising in Golden & Silver Age, artwork and vintage UK comics ..... www.compalcomics.com

eBay ..... www.ebay.co.uk
Heritage Comics Auctions . www.heritagecomics.com

Fantasy art and books

THE DRAGONS GALLERY
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New and back issue dealers

Ace Comics ..... www.acecomics.net

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Krypton Komics ..... www.kryptonkomics.com

MEGA-CITY COMICS
Largest graphic novel catalogue in the country – fast and easy online shopping ..... www.megacitycomics.co.uk

Mighty World of Comicana ..... www.comicana.com
OK Comics ..... www.okcomics.co.uk
Page 45 ..... www.page45.com

QUICKSILVER COMICS
The specialist Silver and Bronze Age site. Over 100,000 items listed, all with cover images ..... www.qscomics.com

SILVER ACRE COMICS
Over 900,000 comics in stock, 110,000 different items listed online ..... www.silveracre.com

30th CENTURY COMICS
Golden Age, comprehensive Silver and Bronze Age and 15,000 British comics all listed www.30thcenturycomics.co.uk

On-line comics companies:

By popular demand, **Comics International** now runs an at-a-glance overview of the major sites for on-line comics collectors and creators. Have your company listed for only £5 (US $8) a month. Bookable in six-issue blocks, companies wishing to be included should send £30 or US $40 (UK: please add £5.25 to cover VAT) with trading name and website address.

♦ Major companies requiring bold and boxed entries should send £60 + £10.50 VAT per six-issue series, US $80 (£10/$16 per issue) and may add three lines of descriptive copy. Cheques and international money orders should be made payable to Comics International and sent to:
Comics International, 345 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JJ
Alternatively, payment can be made by credit card, fax: 0(11 44) 1273 566 333 or e-mail details to: comicsinternational@yahoo.co.uk

Retail Index: UK

Key to the abbreviations used:

imp – air imported new issues
back = back issues stocked
gn = graphic novels
tpbk = trade paperbacks
STO = standing order service (new comics reserved)
s-p = small press and fanzines
ind = independent comics
u/g = underground comix
prl = peripherals/supplies
RPG = role playing games
CCG = customisable card games
merch = trading cards, videos, t-shirts, posters, etc

Sorry, no websites, this is a shop guide

When telephoning from outside the UK, drop the first 0 and replace with: 01144 (USA); 0044 (mainland Europe & Eire); 001144 (Australasia).

Central London

Avalon Comics, 143 Lavender Hill, Battersea, London SW11 5QJ. Mon-Thurs 10-5.45; Fri 10-6.30; Sat 9.30-5.30; Sun 11-3.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 020 7924 3609

Book & Comic Exchange, 14 Pembridge Road, Notting Hill Gate, London W11. Mon-Sun 10-8. Nothing legal refused! (back, ind, u/g) 020 7229 8420

Comic Showcase 63 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0NE. Sun-Wed 10-7; Thurs-Fri 10-8; Sat 9.30-8 (imp, back, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, cartoon books, original art) 020 7434 4349

Forbidden Planet Megastore, 179 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8JR. Mon-Wed 10-7; Thurs 10-8; Sat 10-7; Sun 12-6 (imp, back, gn, STO, s-p, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, sci-fi/fantasy, books, video/DVD, games, mags, toys) 020 7420 3666

Gosh!, 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PH (opposite British Museum). Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs-Fri 10-7; Sat-Sun 10-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, foreign, largest range newspaper strip compilations in UK) 020 7636 1011

Mega-City Comics, 18 Inverness Street, Camden Town, London NW1 7HJ. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs-Fri 10-7; Sat-Sun 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV, fantasy/horror, body art, subculture) 020 7485 9320

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftsbury Avenue, London WC2H 8EH. Mon-Wed 10.30-6.30; Thurs-Sat 10-7; Sun 10-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, film/TV/fantasy) 020 7836 5630

Orbital, 148 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0LB. Mon-Sat 10.30-7; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, gn, STO, manga, toys, Transformers) 020 7240 7672

Outer London

A Place in Space, 101 Church Street, Croydon, Surrey CR0 1RN. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, prl, merch, sci-fi, original art) 020 8686 2400

Atomic Comics, 1112 High Road, Chadwell Heath, Romford, Essex RM6 4AH. Mon-Tues 10.30-5.30; Wed 1-5.30; Thurs-Fri 10.30-6; Sat 10-6 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV, art books, Games Workshop, toys, kits) 020 8597 8547

Calamity Comics, 160 Station Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2HR. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs-Fri 10-7; Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, fantasy film/TV, books, videos) 020 8427 3831

Cosmic Legacy, 7 Shrubbery Road, Streatham, London SW16 2AS. Mon-Sat 10-6; Sun 11-4 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, ind, merch) 020 8696 9428

Epic Heroes, 21/23 Station Road, Edgware, Middlesex HA8 7JE. Mon-Sat 10-6. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, RPG, CCG, merch, toys, posters, Transformers) 020 8952 7181

Forbidden Planet, 175 North End, Croydon CR0 1TP. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs 10-7; Fri 10-6; Sat 9.30-6. (back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, u/g, CCG, merch) 020 8688 7190

Krypton Komics, 252 High Road, Tottenham, London N15 4AJ (next to Tesco) Tues-Wed 11-6; Thurs 10.30-7; Fri 10.30-6; Sat 10-6 Nearest Tube: Seven Sisters Road. (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind) 020 8801 5378 fax: 8376 3174

Piranha, 3 Zurich House, 299 High Street, Sutton, Surrey SM1 1LG. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs 10-7; Fri-Sat 10-6; Sun 11-3 (imp, back, gn, STO, merch, prl) 020 8915 0858

They Walk Among Us, 26 Red Lion Street, Richmond, Surrey TW9 1RW. Mon-Wed 9.30-5.30; Thurs 9.30-6; Fri-Sat 9.30-5.30; Sun 11-4. (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, fantasy/sci-fi horror, subculture) tel/fax: 020 8948 8476

30th Century Comics, 18 Lower Richmond Road, London SW15 1JP. Mon-Wed 10.30-6; Thurs-Fri 10.30-7; Sat 10.30-6; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, Gold/Silver/Bronze Age specialists, British comics/annuals, books) 020 8788 2052

South East

Ace Comics, 63/64 High Street, Colchester, Essex. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch) 01206 561912

The American Comic Shop, 1 Church Street, Chatham, Kent ME4 4BS (off High Street). Mon-Fri 10-5.30 (Tues until 5); Sat 9-5.30. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, action figures) 01634 817410

Calamity Comics, 162 High Street, Watford WD17 2EG. Mon-Tues 10-5.30; Thurs 10-7; Fri 10-6; Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) 01923 249293

Cartoon Shop, 19 East Square, Basildon, Essex SS14 1HT. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, RPG, merch) 01268 534194

Central City Comics, 4 Eagle Street, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 1JB. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, foreign) 01473 233017

Comic Showcase, 19-20 St Clements Street, Oxford OX4 1AB. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 01865 723680

Comix-shop.co.uk, 7a High Street, Maidenhead SL6 1JN. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, tpbk, gn, merch, CCG, toys) 01628 777998

David's Comic Shop, 5 Sydney Street, Brighton, Sussex BN1 4EN. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.45, Sun 11-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g) 01273 691012

Forbidden Planet, 60 Burleigh Street, Cambridge CB1 1DJ. Mon-Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, CCG, merch, videos, sci-fi/fantasy books, film/TV magazines) 01223 301666

Forbidden Planet, 44 The Priory Centre, Dartford, Kent DA1 2HS. Mon-Wed 10.30-5.30; Thurs-Sat 10-5.30 (back, gn, ind, PRG, CCG, merch) 01322 224837

Incognito Comic Shop, 1-2 The Friars, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2AS. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, film/TV) tel/fax: 01227 785898

Off World: The Sci-Fi Store, 142 Market Halls, Arndale Centre, Luton LU1 2TP. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, STO, s-p, CCG, merch, Star Trek/Wars, sci-fi collectables) 01582 736256

Planet Ace, 324-325 Chartwell North, Top Floor, Victoria Plaza, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS2 5SR. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch) 01702 613021

Slough Computers, 50 Village Shopping Centre, Slough, Berks SL1 1HP. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, STO, ind, cards, second hand video games) 01753 521594

Time Trek, 46 High Street, Bromley, Kent BR1 1EG. Mon-Wed/Fri 9.30-5.30; Thurs 10-8; Sat 10-5.30; Sun 10-4 (imp, back, ind, gn, merch, STO, CCG, prl, sf TV/film) 020 8313 0677

Whatever Comics, 2 Burgate Lane, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2HH. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, kits) 01227 453226

Whatever Comics, 5 Middle Row, High Street, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1TF. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, model kits) 01622 681041

Midlands

Abstract Sprocket, 29 St Benedicts Street, Norwich, Norfolk NR2 4PF. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 01603 624410

Close Encounters, 59 Midland Road, Bedford MK10 1PW. Mon-Fri 10-6; Sat 9-6; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, gn, merch, video, DVDs, action figures, t-shirts, trading cards) 01234 270777

Comic Culture, The Mall, 257-259 High Street, Lincoln LN2 1HX. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, RPG, CCG, prl) 01522 546611

Forbidden Planet, 31 Cross Cheaping, Coventry CV1 1HF. Mon-Wed 9.30-6; Thurs 9.30-7; Fri-Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV) 024 76229672

Forbidden Planet Superstore, 38 Priory Queensway, Birmingham B4 7LA. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (Thurs-Fri to 6) (imp, back, gn, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, books, games, mags, kits, toys, videos) 0121 236 3026

FPI Derby, 1/2 The Corn Exchange, Albert Street, Derby DE1 2DS. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, merch, rock/film TV memorabilia, video games) 01332 206606

FPI Hanley, 52 Stafford Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent ST1 1JB. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, rock memorabilia, alchemy metalware) 01782 279294 fax: 202381

FPI Leicester, 23 Silver Street, Leicester LE1 5EU. Mon-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, foreign, alchemy metalware, rock memorabilia) 01162 515266

FPI Nottingham, 19-23 Friar Lane, Nottingham NG1 6DA. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, foreign, rock memorabilia, alchemy metalware) 01159 484122

FPI Wolverhampton, 23 Victoria Street, Wolverhampton WV1 3NP. Mon-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5.30, Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, rock memorabilia, alchemy metalware) 01902 717440

Ground Zero, 9 Toothill Lane, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire NG18 1NJ. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, STO, prl, CCG, merch, toys) 01623 622017

Nostalgia & Comics (FPI), 14-16 Smallbrook, Queensway, Birmingham. Mon-Thurs 9.15-5.45; Fri-Sat 9.15 6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 0121 643 0143

Page 45, 9 Market Street, Nottingham NG1 6HY. Mon-Sat 9-6. (imp, back, gn, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, manga) 0115 950 8045

Phoenix Comix, 29 Abington Square, Northampton NN1 4AE. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, RPG, CCG, action figures) 01604 602311

Travelling Man, c/o Gamestation, 1st Floor, 6 East Street, Derby DE1. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, prl, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures, fantasy books, film/TV) 0115 950 9231

Travelling Man, c/o Gamestation, 1st Floor, 16 Angel Row, Nottingham NG1 6HL. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures, miniatures) 0115 950 9231

North West

All-American, 102 Newport Street, Bolton BL3 6AB. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, gn, STO, merch, Star Wars, WWF, action figures, S/Age, videos, records, CDs) 01204 366553

Batcave, 39 Penny Street, Blackburn, Lancashire BB1 6HQ. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, gn, STO, RPG, CCG, merch) 01254 667488

Forbidden Planet, 92 Bold Street, Liverpool L1 4HY. Mon-Wed 9.30-5.30; Thurs 9.30-7; Fri-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV, sci-fi horror) 0151 707 1491

Forbidden Planet Megastore (FPI), 65 Oldham Street, Piccadilly, Manchester M1 1JR. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30; Sun 12-5 (two floors; imp, back, STO, RPG, CCG, merch, books, toys, film and TV tie-ins, manga) 0161 839 4777

Imagination Station, 41 Bank Street, Carlisle, Cumbria CA3 8HJ. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch)

Millennium Comics, 4 Church Road, Northwich, Cheshire CW9 5NT. Mon-Tues 10-5; Thurs-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, RPG, merch, action figures, toys) 01606 49255

Thunderbooks, 332 Lytham Road, Blackpool, Lancashire FY4 1DW. Mon/Tues/Thurs-Sat (Sundays in June-Oct only) 10-5.30; Wed 1-3.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, media collectors' items) 01253 348321 fax: 407813

Thunderbooks II, 116 Friargate, Preston, Lancashire PR1 9EE. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, RPG, merch) 01772 204287

Time Tunnel, 13 Earle Street, Crewe, Cheshire CW1 2BS. Mon and Wed-Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, merch, film/TV memorabilia, action figures, videos, model kits) 01270 215496

Travelling Man, 4 Dale Street, Manchester M1 1JW. (imp, back, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, CCG, merch, prl) 0161 237 1877

Worlds Apart (FPI), 58-60 Lime Street (city centre), Liverpool. Mon-Sat 10-6; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, film) 0151 707 0839

North East

Books 'N' Comics, Unit 15, Forbes Building, Linthorpe Road, Middlesbrough, Cleveland TS1 4AW. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, merch, fantasy and film magazines, Doctor Who/Star Trek) 01642 249143

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 30 Eastgate, The Headrow, Leeds LS2 7JL. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, LF film books, film/TV mags, posters, toys, kits, trading cards, stills, Star Trek/Doctor Who) 0113 242 6325

Forbidden Planet, 59 Grainger Street, Newcastle NE1 5JE. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV mags, fantasy/sci-fi books, videos) 0191 261 9173

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 41 Dundas Street, Middlesbrough TS1 1HR. Mon-Wed 9.30-5.30; Thurs 9.30-7; Fri-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, gn, s-p, STO, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch, video, action figures, film/TV, manga) 01642 248889

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 12 Matilda Street, off the Moor, Sheffield S1 4QD. Mon-Tues 10-5.30; Wed-Fri 10-6; Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, original art, model kits, sci-fi/fantasy books, horror magazines, newspaper strip books) 0114 276 9475

The Last Picture Show, 38-39 The Lanes, The Oasis, Meadowhall Centre, Sheffield S9 1EP. Mon-Thurs 10-8; Fri 10-9; Sat 9-7, Sun 11-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV and rock memorabilia) 0114 256 9604 fax: 255 3399

Millennium Comics, Stall 141, Warrington Indoor Market. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, RPG, merch, action figures, toys) 01925 575657

Off-World Comics, 200 Park View, Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear NE26 3QP. Mon-Tues/Thurs 10-5.30 (closed Wed); Fri 10-6; Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, CCG, merch) 0191 251 2288

OK Comics, 19 Thorntons Arcade, Briggate, Leeds LS1 6LQ. (imp, back, gn, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl) 01132 469366

Sheffield Space Centre, 33 The Wicker, Sheffield. Mon-Tues/Thurs-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, merch, Star Trek specialists) 0114 275 8905

Travelling Man, Unit 8/9, The Corn Exchange, Call Lane, Leeds LS1 7BR. Mon-Thurs 10-5.30; Fri-Sat 9-5.30; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures) 0113 242 7227

Travelling Man, 43 Grainger Street, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne NE1 5JE. (imp, back, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, CCG, merch, prl) 0191 261 4993

Travelling Man, 54 Goodramgate, York YO1 2LF. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp,

back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures) 01904 628787

2Tone Comics, 40 Market Street, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire HX7 6AA. Thurs-Sun 10.30-5.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, merch, CGC) 01422 845666

West Country

American Dream Comics, 72 Walcot Street, Bath BA1 5BD. Mon-Fri 10-5; Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, original art, hobby kits, CDs) 01225 424881

American Graffiti, 78 Church Lane, Barnstaple, Devon EX31 1BH. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 01271 325740

MOVED **Area 51**, 230 Gloucester Road, Horfield, Bristol BS7 8NZ. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, original art) 0117 924 4655

Automattic Comics, Unit 2, 17 Pickwick Road, Corsham SN13 9BQ. Mon-Tues 12-5; Thurs-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 01249 701647

Collector's Choice, 45 Southgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1TX. Mon-Sat 9-5 (S/Age, British comics/annuals, vintage mags, toys, memorabilia) 01452 410232

Forbidden Planet, 30 Penn Street, Bristol BS1 3AS. Mon-Wed 9.30-5.30; Thurs 9.30-7; Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV mags, subculture) 0117 929 8692

Forbidden Planet, 43-45 East Street, Southampton SO14 3HN. Mon-Wed 9.30-5.30; Thurs 9.30-6; Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV) 023 80230991 fax: 230996

Ian's Books & Comics, 195a Albert Road, Southsea, Portsmouth PO4 0JP (next to Tesco). Mon-Tues/Thurs-Fri 10.30-5.15 (Wed closed); Sat 10-5.15 (imp, back, tpbk, STO, s-p, prl, toys) 023 92422731

Kathies Comics, Unit BG29, Broadmead Gallery, The Galleries Shopping Centre, Bristol BS1 3XB. Mon-Wed/Fri-Sat 9-5.30; Thurs 9-6; Sun 11-5.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 0117 922 1170

Kathies Comics, 20 Market Avenue, Plymouth, PL1 1PH. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 01752 257800

Paradox Comics, 17 High Street, Poole, Dorset BH15 1AB. Mon-Fri 10.30-5; Sat 10-5 (imp, back, gn, STO, ind, merch, videos) 01202 661346

Travelling Man, 8 Park Street, Bristol BS1 5NF. (imp, back, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, CCG, merch, prl) 0117 925 8833

Wales

Cardiff's Comic Guru Presents!, 20-22 Wyndham Arcade, Cardiff CF10 1FJ. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs 10-9; Fri-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, CCG, merch) 029 202 29119

Cardiff Fantasy Centre, 1st Floor, Jacobs Market, West Canal Wharf, Cardiff. Sat 9.30-4.30 (imp, back, STO; established over 20 years) 029 206 58184 (evenings)

Comix Shoppe, 13 Shoppers Walk, Swansea SA1 3AY. Mon-Fri 10-5; Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, CCG, merch, anime, Games Workshop) 01792 642097

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 5 Duke Street, Cardiff. Mon-Wed 10-5.30; Thurs 10-6.30; Fri 10-5.30; Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, sci-fi fantasy/horror books, Star Trek/Wars) 029 202 28885

Negative Zone, Provision Market Gallery, High Street, Newport, Gwent NP9 1DD. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, gn, STO, s-p, ind; established for 12 years) 01633 222159

Scotland

Asylum Books & Games, 29 Adelphi, Aberdeen AB11 5B2. Mon 10-8; Tues-Wed 10-6; Thurs 10-8; Fri-Sat 10-6; Sun 12-5 (imp, back, STO, new/second hand RPG, CCG, books, original art) 01224 574637

Black Hole Comic Shop, Unit 3, 5 Victoria Road, Dundee DD1 1ER. Mon-Thurs 10-5; Fri-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, second hand records, CDs, videos) 01382 221037

City Centre Comics, 51 Parnie Street, Glasgow G1 5LU. Tues-Sat 10-5 (back) 0141 552 2208

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 12 Schoolhill, Aberdeen AB10 1JX. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs 10-7; Fri 10-6; Sat 9.30-5.30; Sun 12-5 (imp, gn, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, CCG, merch) 01224 622131

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 40-41 South Bridge, Edinburgh EH1 1LL. Mon-Wed 10-5.30; Thurs 10-6.30; Fri-Sat 10-5.30; Sun 12-5. (imp, STO, s-p, ind, merch, foreign) 0131 558 8226

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 168 Buchanan Street, Glasgow G1 2LW. Mon-Sat 10-5.30; Sun 12-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 0141 331 1215

Justice Comics, Unit 36, The Arcade, Stirling FK8 1AX. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch) 01786 447687

Plan 9, 9 Rosemount Viaduct, Aberdeen AB25 1NE. Mon-Wed 10-5; Thurs 10-6; Fri-Sat 10-5; Sun 1-4. (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, WWF, merch, sci-fi) tel/fax: 01224 624467

Red Hot Comics, Block D Unit 7, Glenwood Business Park, Glenwood Place, Glasgow G45 9UH. Mon-Sat 11.30-5.30; Sun 12-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 0141 630 0049

Northern Ireland

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 52-54 Ann Street, Belfast BT1 4EG Mon-Wed 9-5.30; Thurs 9-8.30; Fri-Sat 9-5.30; Sun 1-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch) 028 90438744

Planet Ace Derry, 33 Shipquat Street, Derry, Londonderry BT48 6DF. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) 02871 369787

Retail Index: USA

When telephoning from outside the USA, include the bracketed 00. Out-of-town US calls begin with the 1 prefix only. The following is a fraction of the estimated 3,000+ US comics stores.

Alabama

Optic Nerve, 1930 12th Avenue South, Birmingham, AL 35205 (film, newsstand, ind) (00)1 205 933 2787

Alaska

Bosco's in Spenard, 2606 Spenard Road, Anchorage 99503. Mon-Sat 11-8, Sun 12-6 (new, back, CCG, RPG, cards, anime, merch) (00) 1 907 274 4112

Bosco's Diamond Centre, 800 East Diamond Boulevard, Anchorage 99577. Mon-Fri 10-9; Sat 10-6; Sun 12-5 (new, back, CCG, RPG, cards, anime, games, Star Wars/Trek) (00) 1 907 344 3963

Bosco's in Eagle River, 11432 Business Boulevard, Eagle River. Mon-Sat 12-8, Sun 12-5 (new, back, CCG, RPG, cards, merch) (00) 1 907 696 5166

Arizona

Lost Dutchman, 747 West Camelback Road, Phoenix, AZ 85013. Mon-Sun 10-7. (new, back) (00)1 619 278 0371

California

Comickaze, 5525 Clairemont Mesa Boulevard, San Diego, CA 62117-2342. Mon-Fri 11-7; Sat 11-6; Sun 12-6 (new, back, CCG, merch)(00)1 858 278 0371

Comix Experience, 305 Divisadero Street, San Francisco, CA 94117. Mon-Sat 11-7; Sun 12-5 (new, back) (00)1 415 863 9258

Flying Colors Comics, 2980 Treat Blvd, Concord, CA 94518. Mon-Sat 11-7 (Fri until 8); Sun 12-6 (new, back, ind, cards, merch) (00)1 510 825 5410

Lee's Comics, Inc., 1020-F N Rengstorff Avenue, Mountain View, CA 94043. Mon-Sun 10-9 (new, back: 1930s to date, anime, manga, s-p, adult, merch) (00)1 650 965 1800

Lee's Comics, Inc., 2222 South El Camino Real, San Mateo, CA 94403. Mon-Sun 10-9, (new, back: 1930s to date, anime, manga, adult, s-p, merch) (00)1 650 571 1489

Meltdown Comics & Collectibles, 7522 Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90046 (toys, comics, books) (00)1 323 851 7223

Stand-Up Comics, 10020 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito, CA 94530. Mon-Fri 11 7; Sat-Sun 11-6 (new, back, cards, anime, CCG, merch) (00)1 510 525 3344

Third Planet, 3822 Sepulveda Boulevard, Torrance, CA 90505. Sun-Thurs 11-8; Fri + Sat 11-9 (new, ind, back, CCG, RPG, GW, sci-fi/fantasy, anime, merch) (00)1 310 791 6227

Hawaii

Gecko Books & Comics, 3613 Waialae Avenue, Honolulu, 96816. Mon-Sun 9-9 (new, back, cards, toys, merch) (00)1 808 732 1292

Illinois

Comic Kingdom, 5941 W Irving Park Road, Chicago, IL 60634. (new, back) (00)1 773 545 2231

Louisiana

Comic Cosmos, 343 W Esplanade Avenue, Kenner, LA 70065. Mon-Thur 11.30-7, Fri-Sat 11-7.30, Sun 12-5 (new, back, cards, CCG, toys, anime) (00)1 504 286 0039

Crescent City Comics & Cards, 6111 Elysian Fields, New Orleans, LA 70122. Mon-Sat 11-7, Sun 12-6 (new, back, cards, CCG, RPG, anime) (00)1 504 286 0039

More Fun Comics, 8200 Oak Street, New Orleans, LA 70118. Tues-Sat 11-7, Sun-Mon 12-6 (new, back, cards, CCG, merch, toys, CDs) (00)1 504 865 1800

Maine

Casablanca Comics, 151 Middle Street, Portland, ME 04101. Mon-Sat 10-9, Sun 12-7 (new, back, cards, CCG, RPG, merch, art) (00)1 207 780 1676

Casablanca Comics, 778 Roosevelt Trail, Windham, ME 04062. Mon-Fri 11-7, Sat 10-6, Sun 12-5 (new, back, CCG, RPG, merch)(00)1 207 892 0056

Massachusetts

Comicopia, 464 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts 02215. Mon-Sun 11-7 (Wed 10-8) (new, merch, CCG, manga, tpbk)(00)1 617 266 4266

Minnesota

Uncle Sven's Comic Shoppe, 1838 St Clair Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55105. Mon-Fri 3-6, Sat 11-4 (new, back, tpbk, gn, videos, action figures, CCG, RPG; est 19 years) (00)1 651 699 3409

New York State

Earthworld Comics, 327 Central Avenue, Albany, NY 12206. Mon-Wed 11-6; Thur-Fri 11-7, Sat 11-6, Sun 12-5 (new, back, ind, manga/anime, cards, merch) (00)1 518 465 5495

Forbidden Planet (FPI associate), 840 Broadway (at 13th St, NY 10003. Mon-Sat 10-10; Sun 12-10. (new, ind, back, RPG, merch, fantasy) (00)1 212 473 1576

Jim Hanley's Universe Ltd, 4 West 33rd Street (opposite Empire State Building), NY 10001. Mon-Sat 9am-11pm; Sun 10-9. (Everything to do with comics) (00)1 212 268 7088

Jim Hanley's Universe Ltd, 325 New Dorp Lane, Staten Island, NY 10306. Mon-Sun; 12-9. (Everything to do with comics) (00)1 718 351 6299

Midtown Comics, 200 West 40th Street, NY 10018 (00)1 212 302-8192

Ohio

The Laughing Ogre, 4258 North High Street, Columbus, Ohio 43214. Mon-Sat 10-9; Sun 12-5 (new, back, cards, merch) (00)1 614 267 6473

Oklahoma

Time Warp, 588 SE Washington Street, Bartlesville, OK 74006 (new, back, cards, games, toys, CDs, sci-fi/fantasy) (00)1 918 335 3373

Pennsylvania

Comic Castle, 17 West Fourth Street, Williamsport, PA 17703 Mon-Sun 10-9 (new, back) (00)1 717 322 8763

Golden Eagle, Berkshire Square, 1159 Berkshire Boulevard, Wyoming, PA 19610 (new, back, games, CCG, cards, Star Wars/Trek) (00)1 610 376 8255

Golden Eagle, Fairgrounds Square Mall, Reading, PA 19605 (new, back, games, CCG, cards, Star Wars/Trek) (00)1 610 921 3160

Tennessee

Collector's World, 1511 E Main Street, Murfreesboro, TN 37130. Open all week (new, back, CCG, merch, cards, CDs) (00)1 615 895 1120

Collector's World, Hickory Plaza South Central, 5751 Nolensville Road, Nashville, TN 37211. Open all week (new, back, CCG, merch, cards, CDs) (00)1 615 895 1120

Collector's World, 10820 Kingston Park #10, Knoxville, TN 37922 Open all week (new, back, CCG, merch, cards, CDs) (00)1 423 675 6830

Collector's World, 4006 Granny White Park, Nashville, TN 37204 (new, back, CCG, merch)(00)1 615 385 8136

Texas

Cliff's Comics, 2205 West Berry Street, Fort Worth, TX 76110. (new, back, cards, merch) (00)1 817 927 7172

Collectible Heroes, 502 West Calton Road #307, Laredo, TX 78041. Mon-Wed 2-7.30; Thurs-Sat 11.30-7.30 (new, back, cards, merch) (00)1 956 791 8428

Dragon's Lair Comics & Fantasy, 616 West 34th Street, Austin, TX 78705 (new, back, games, anime, miniatures, prl) (00)1 512 454 2399

Virginia

Thore Comics, 3514 Oaklawn Boulevard, Hopewell, VA 23860. Mon-Sat 11-7, (new, back, Silver Age, sci-fi, M:TG, cards, vinyl)(00)1 804 458 9561

Trilogy Shop, 700 E Little Creek Road, Norfolk, VA 23518. Mon-Fri 11-7, Sat 10-7, Sun 12-6 (new, back, merch) (00)1 757 587 2540

Wisconsin

Lost World of Wonders, 6713 West Oklahoma Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53219 (00)1 414 328 4651

Direct Market Retailers:

Comics International's Retail Index is THE international retail reference source for collectors, creators, publishers and journalists. Through it you can reach over 40,000 dedicated readers each issue for only £6 (US $10) a month! Bookable in six-issue blocks, retailers wishing to be included should send US $60 or £36 (UK: please add £6.30 to cover VAT @ 17.5%) plus shop information as detailed on previous page to:

Comics International, 345 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JJ

Cheques and international money orders should be made payable to Comics International. Alternatively, payment can be made by credit card, fax: 0(11 44) 1273 566 333 or e-mail: comicsinternational@yahoo.co.uk

The letters **(FPI)** after various entries indicates that the company is part of **Forbidden Planet International Ltd**

Retailers: International

Australia

Arcadia Unbound, 267 Forest Road, Hurstville, NSW 2220. Mon-Fri 10.30-7, Sat 10-4, Sun 12-3 (imp, back, manga, merch, CCG) (0061) 2 9585 1489

Books & Bounties/Comics Haven, 157a Charters Towers Road, Townsville, Queensland 4812. Mon-Sat 9-6 (imp, back, gn, merch, RPG, CCG) (0061) 7 4779 2408

Fan Attic, 1st Floor, 91 Elizabeth Street, Brisbane, Queensland 4002. Mon-Sun 9.30-5.30 (toys, Star Wars, sci-fi collectibles) (0061) 7 3221 1420

Kinda Lotsa Comics and Stuff, Shop 4, 503-511 King Street, Newtown, Sydney, NSW. Mon-Sat 10.30-7.30 (back, toys, merch)(0061) 2 9565 1054

Known Space Books, 1st Floor, 108 Gawler Place, Adelaide, SA 5000. Wed-Sat 12-6 (US/UK back) (0061) 8 8223 4304

Phantom Zone, 23 Anderson Street, Chatswood, NSW 2067. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4 (imp, back, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 9411 3709

Phantom Zone, 198 Mann Street, Gosford, NSW 2250. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4. (imp, back, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 43 25 4599

Phantom Zone, 207 George Street, Liverpool, NSW. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4. (imp, back, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 9601 2622

Phantom Zone, 285 Hunter Street, Newcastle, NSW. 2300. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4. (imp, back, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 4929 5717

Phantom Zone, 101a Argyle Street, Parramatta, NSW 2150 Mon-Fri 9-6; Sat-Sun 9-4 (imp, back, books, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 9891 1848

Phantom Zone, 268 Crown Street, Wollongong, NSW. 2500. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4 (imp, back, gn, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 4228 7393

Austria

Comic Treff, Getreidemarkt 2-4, 1010 Vienna. Mon-Fri 10-7, Sat 10-1 (imp, back, gn, CCG) (0043) 11 586 76 27

Belgium

Forbidden Zone, 25 Rue de Tamines, 1060 Brussels. (3 floors; imp, back, merch, US/French, STO, toys) (0032 2) 534 63 67 (fax 538 24 52)

Canada

Connection MD, 1539 Van Horne Avenue, Montreal, Quebec H2V 1L4. Mon-Sat 11-6 (new, merch, back, CCG) (00)1 514 948 2627

Dragon Lady Comics & Paper Nostalgia, 609 College Street, Toronto, Ontario M6G 1B5. (00)1 416 536 7460

Little Shop of Heroes, 160 Wallace Avenue, South Listowel, Ontario N4W 1X9 (00)1 519 291 2281

Silver Snail Comic Shop, 367 Queen Street West, Toronto M5V 2A4. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs-Fri 11-8; Sat 10-6; Sun 12-5 (00)1 416 593 0889

France

Album, 67 boulevard St Germain, 75005 Paris. Mon-Sat 10-8; Sun 12-7 (imp, back, gn) (0033) 53 10 00 60

Album, 6 rue Dante, 75005 Paris. Mon-Sat 10-8; Sun 12-7 (imp, back, gn) (0033) 43 54 67 09

Alpha Omega, 25 rue de la Clef, 59800 Lille. Mon 2.30-7.30, Tue-Sat 10.30-12.30/2.30-7.30 (imp, back, French, merch, trading/gaming cards, toys, RPG, Wars/Trek, B5, L5R) (0033) 320 319 375

Astro City, 22 rue Masurel, 59800 Lille. Mon 3-7.30; Tue-Sat 10-12.30, 2-7.30 (imp, manga, cards, merch, kits) (0033) 320 55 1010

Impact Comics, 64 rue Condorcet, 75009 Paris. Mon-Sat 11-7.30 (imp, back, merch, CCG)(0033) 42 80 30 10

L'Antre des Dragons, 56 rue de Loup, 33000 Bordeaux. Mon-Sat 10-1/2-7 (imp, manga, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0033) 55 65 17378

Les Nageurs de Sable, 14 rue Courteline, 37058 Tours. Mon-Sat 11-1/2-7 (imp, back, cards, merch) (0033) 2 47 39 52 40

Pulps, 14 bld Morland, 75004 Paris. Mon-Sat 11-7 (imp, back, RPG) (0033) 1 42 72 55 25

Germany

Black Dog Comics, Rodenberg Strasse 9, 10439 Berlin. Mon-Fri 11-6.30, Sat 11-2 (imp, back, gn, t/cards) (0049) 30 4473 6486

Grober Unfug, Zossenerstrasse 32-33, 10961 Berlin. Mon-Sat 11-7 (imp, back, gn, CCG, merch) (0049) 30 6940 1490

Greece

Metropolis Comics, 94 Metropoleos St, 54622 Thessaloniki. Mon-Sat 10.30-3.30/7.30-11.30 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0030) 3 193 7775

Solaris, 6 Botasi Str, 10682, Athens. Mon-Sat 9-3.30/5-8.30 (imp, back, gn, merch) (0030) 1 384 1065

Holland

Henk Lie's Comics & Manga Store, Zeeduk 104, 1012BB Amsterdam. Mon-Sat 11-6; Sun 11-9 (imp, cards, merch, CCG) (0031) 20 421 3688

Hungary

Troll Kepregenyta'r, Terez Krt 13, Budapest 1067. Mon-Fri 10-6, Sat 10-1(imp, manga, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0036) 1 322 6026

Irish Republic

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 5-6 Crompton Quay, Dublin 2. Mon-Sat 10-6 (Thurs 10-7); Sun 12-5 (imp, back, ind, merch, u/g, UK, gn, STO) (0035) 3167 10688

Sub-City Comics, 2 Exchequer Street, Dublin 2. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) (0035) 3167 71902

Sub-City Comics, Unit 10, Level 1, Corbettcourt Centre, Eyre Square, Galway. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) (0035) 3915 65994

The 3rd Place, Crow Street, Temple Bar, Dublin 2. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) (0035) 3163 36965

Italy

Avalon, via Battisti 9/b, Bologna. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10.30-1/2-7.30 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0039) 051 234459

Avalon, via Pedriali 21, Forli. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10-1/2-7 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0039) 0543 33523

Avalon, via Settembrini 20, Milan. Mon 3.30-7.30, Tue-Sat 11-7.30 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0039) 022 9400410

Avalon, via Foscolo 3, Padova. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10-1/2-7. (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch)(0039) 049 658290

Avalon, via Bissolati 68, Rome. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10-1/2-7 (imp, back, gn, CCG, cards, merch)

Avalon, via Magenta 0, Torino. Mon 3.30-7, Tue-Sat 10.30-1, 2-7.30 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0039) 011 5617252

Forbidden Planet, via Pinerolo 11/15, 00182 Rome (imp, back, gn) (0039) 06 70305702

Il Marchio Giallo, via Deghi Scipioni 116, Rome. Tue-Sat 10.30-1/2-7.30 (imp, back, merch, kits) (0039) 06 361 40 60

La Borsa del Fumetto, via Lecco 16, 20124 Milano. (imp, back, European and RPG, CCG) (0039) 11 5617252

Malaysia

The Mind Shop, Starhill Centre, Jalang Bukit Bintag, Kuala Lumpur. Mon-Sat 11-10 (imp, CCG, RPG, merch) (00603) 241 8871

The Mind Shop, S 58 Bandar Utama, Petaling Jaya. Mon-Sat 11-10 (imp, CCG, RPG, merch) (00603) 719 8246

The Mind Shop, Jin SS21/39, Petaling Jaya. Mon-Sat 11-10 (imp, CCG, RPG, merch) (00603) 717 6602

New Zealand

Heroes For Sale, Level 2, 62 Queen St, Auckland. Mon-Sat 10-7 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g)(0064) 9 307 0682

Whitcoulls Corner Branch, 210 Queen Street, Private Bag 92098, Auckland. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, s-p, merch, ind, u/g) (0064) 9 356 5400 (fax: 9 356 5408)

Portugal

BdMania, Rua das Flores 67-71 R/C, 1200 Lisboa. Mon-Sat 11-7.30 (imp, back, CCG, merch) (00351) 21 346 1207

Interzona, Centro Comercial Brasilia, Loja 203, Rua Luis Veaga Lertao 98-120, 6050 Porto. Mon-Sat 11-11 (imp, back, gn, CCG, merch) (00351) 22 609 1460

Mundo Fantasma, Centro Comercial Brasilia, Rua Luis Veiga Leitao, 98/120, 1 Andar-Loja 203, 4050-399 Porto. Mon-Sat 11-11 (US imp, back, gn, CCG, merch) (00351) 22 609 1460

South Africa

Euroniag, Shop 79A, East Rand Mall, Boksburg, Johannesburg. Mon-Sun 9-10 (imp, back, gn, CCG, merch) (0027) 11 896 3773

Zed Bree's Comic Universe, Mediterr-anean Building, 24 Tenth Ave, Edenvale 1610 Gauteng. 9.30-6 (imp, merch, gn, CCG) 002711 453 4215 (fax 453 4459)

Spain

Gigamesh, RDA San Pedro 53, 08010 Barcelona. Mon-Sat 10-1.30/4.30-8 (imp, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0034) 3 246 6359

Sweden

Comics Heaven, Stora Nygatan 23, 11127 Stockholm. Mon-Sat 10-6.30 (imp, back, gn, merch)(0046) 8 202516

Switzerland

Analph Comicladen Strassburgstr, 10 PO Box 1030, 8004 Zürich. (0041) 1 2419695 fax 1 2403442

The letters **(FPI)** after entries indicate that the company is part of **Forbidden Planet International Ltd**

International Festivals

A listing of the world's major comics festivals and conventions. For further information, call the organisers on the phone, fax or e-mail numbers provided. To view updates, contact them on their websites. Organisers' estimates of their previous year's attendance is given in brackets.

July 14-17: United States

COMIC-CON INTERNATIONAL '05, San Diego, California. Organisers: Comic-Con International, PO Box 128458, San Diego, CA 92112-8458. 001 619 491 2475. www.comic-con.org

August 5-7: United States

WIZARD WORLD CHICAGO CON 2005. Organisers: Wizard World Chicago, 151 Wells Avenue, Congers, NY 10920-2064. 001 608 226 0200. www.wizarduniverse.com

August 13-14: England

MEMORABILIA '05, NEC, Birmingham. Organisers: Memorabilia, Lawrence House, Morrell Street, Leamington Spa CV32 5SZ. 0870 224 8615. www.memorabilia.co.uk

August 26-28: Canada

CANADIAN NATIONAL COMIC BOOK EXPO 2005, Metro Toronto Convention Center, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. www.hobbystar.com

September 2-5: United States

DRAGON*CON 2005, Atlanta, Georgia. Organisers: Dragon*Con, PO Box 16459, Atlanta, GA 30321-9998. 001 770 909 0115. www.dragoncon.org

September 17-18: United States

BALTIMORE COMIC-CON, The Baltimore Convention Centre, One West Pratt Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21201. 001 410 526 7410. www.comicon.com/baltimore

September 18-19: Finland

THE 19TH HELSINKI COMICS FESTIVAL. Organisers: The Finnish Comics Society, PL 927, 00101 Helsinki, Finland. 00358 50 407 0553. E-mail: tiina-riikka.rauhala@humak.edu

October 7-9: Norway

RAPTUS INTERNATIONAL COMICS FESTIVAL. Organisers: Raptus Bergen Comics Festival, Box 31, 5838 Bergen, Norway. 0047 986 71 710. www.raptus.no

October 12-13: Belgium

FACTS 2005, ICC Citadelpark, 9000 Gent. Organisers: Forbidden Zone, 25 Rue de Tamines, 1060 Brussels, Belgium. 0032 2 534 63 67. www.facts-convention.com

October 29-November 1: Italy

LUCCA COMICS & GAMES. Organisers: Lucca Comics & Games, Via della Cavallerizza 11, 55100 Lucca, Italy. 0039 583 48522. E-mail: info@luccacomicsandgames.com

November 16-18: England

PROCON 2005, The Old Ship Hotel, Brighton. Organisers: Quality Communications. Website: www.procon2005.co.uk

November 19-20: England

COMIC EXPO 2005, Hilton Metropole, Brighton. Organisers: Quality Communications. Website: www.comicexpo.biz

January 26-29: France

ANGOULEME BD. Organisers: Festival International de la Bande Dessinee, 2 Place d l'Hotel de Ville, 16000 Angouleme, France. 0033 05 45 97 86 50. E-mail: b.monchart@labd.com. www.bdangouleme.com

February 24-26: United States

MEGACON 2006, Orange County Convention Centre, Orlando, Florida. Organisers MegaCon, PO Box 1097, Safety Harbor, FL 34695, USA. 001 727 796 5725. www.megaconvention.com

Comics Publishers

North America

Unlike Europe, North American publishers invariably favour indie status to that of being labelled small press. This results in there being hundreds of comics publishers.

While circulations vary immensly, the following are the continent's major comicbook producers with titles printing between 5,000 and 150,000 copies. Contact telephone numbers are given where readily available. Website details can be found on the first page of the directory section.

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM, PO Box 1674 Station C, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada N2G 4R2 (Cerebus)

ABSTRACT STUDIOS, PO Box 271487, Houston, TX 77277-1487 (Strangers in Paradise)

AC COMICS, PO Box 521216, Longwood, FL 32752-1216 (adventure titles, Golden Age superhero and western reprints)

ACCLAIM COMICS, 1 Acclaim Plaza, Glen Cove, NY 11542 (game tie-in adventure, Valiant superhero imprint. dormant)
(00)1 516 656 5000

AiT/PLANET LAR, 2034 47th Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94116 (graphic novels)
(00)1 415 504 7516

ALTERNATIVE COMICS, 503 North West 37th Ave, Gainesville, FL 32609-2204 (alternative titles and graphic novels)
(00)1 352 373 6336

AMERICAN MEDIA CONSUMER ENTERTAINMENT, INC, 600 East Coast Avenue, Lantana, Florida 33464 (Cracked)
(00)1 561 586 1111

ANTARCTIC PRESS, 7272 Wurzbach Parkway , Suite 204, San Antonio, Texas TX 78240 (adventure and US manga titles)

ARCHIE COMIC PUBLICATIONS, 325 Fayette Avenue, Mamaroneck, NY 10543 (humour titles)
(00)1 914 381 5155

AVATAR PRESS, 9 Triumph Drive, Urbana, IL 61802 (horror and fantasy titles) (00)1 217 384 2216

AWESOME ENTERTAINMENT, 9744 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 402, Beverly Hills, Los Angeles, CA 90212 (adventure titles; dormant)

BONGO ENTERTAINMENT, 1440 South Sepulveda Boulevard, 3rd Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90025 (The Simpsons and Futurama and related humour titles)
(00)1 310 966 6168

CALIBER COMICS, 225 North Sheldon Road, Plymouth, MI 48170 (black and white adventure titles)
(00)1 734 462 0457

CARTOON BOOKS, PO Box 16973, Columbus, OH43216 (Bone and related titles)

CROSSGEN ENTERTAINMENT, INC, 4023 Tampa Road, Suite 2400, Oldsmar, FL 34677 (fantasy and adventure titles)
(00)1 813 891 1702

CRUSADE FINE ARTS LTD, PO Box 845, Bayport, NY 11705 (fantasy and adventure)
(00)1 631 472 2866

DARK HORSE COMICS, 10956 South East Main Street, Milwaukie, OR 97222 (adventure, licensed, US and Japanese manga)
(00)1 503 652 8815

DC COMICS, 1700 Broadway, NY 10019 (adventure and humour titles, MAD, Vertigo and Paradox Press imprints) (00)1 212 636 5400

DRAWN & QUARTERLY, PO Box 48056, Montreal, Quebec, H2V 4SB, Canada (black and white biog)

DREAMWAVE PRODUCTIONS, 11 Allstate Parkway, Suite 200, Markham, Ontario L3R 9T8, Canada (adventure titles)

DYNAMIC FORCES, 155 Ninth Avenue, Suite E, Runnemede, NJ 08078 (variant editions and limited edition merchandise)
(00)1 856 312 1040

FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS, 7563 Lake City Way North East, Seattle, Washington 98115 (adventure, biographical and Eros adult titles)
(00)1 206 524 1967

HARRIS COMICS, 1115 Broadway, 8th Floor, NY 10010 (Vampirella, fantasy and horror titles)
(00)1 212 807 7100

HEAVY METAL, 100 North Village Road, Suite 12, Rockville Center, NY 11570 (adult fantasy magazines and spin-off editions)

HUMANOIDS PUBLISHING, PO Box 931658, Hollywood, California CA 90093 (US-European editions)

IMAGE COMICS, 1071 North Batavia Street, Suite A, Orange, CA 92867 (adventure titles)
(00)1 714 2880200

MOVED MARVEL ENTERPRISES, INC, 417 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10016 (adventure, humour and licensed titles) (00)1 212 5764000

NBM PUBLICATIONS, 185 Madison Avenue, Suite 1504, New York, NY 10016 (adult fantasy graphic novels and magazines)

ONI PRESS, 6336 South East Milwaukie Avenue, PMB 30, Portland, OR 97202 (adventure titles)

RADIO COMIX, 11765 West Avenue, PMB #117, San Antonio, TX 78216 (anthropomorphic manga) (00)1 210 3487195

SIRIUS ENTERTAINMENT, INC, PO Box 834, Stanhope, NJ 07802 (adult titles)

SLAVE LABOR GRAPHICS PUBLISHING, 577 South Market Street, San Jose, CA 95113 (black and white fantasy titles)
(00)1 9718929

TOP SHELF PRODUCTIONS, PO Box 1282, Marietta, GA 30061-1282 (alternative and biographical titles) (00)1 770 4276395

TWOMORROWS PUBLISHING, 10407 Bedfordtown Drive, Raleigh, NC 27614 (comics feature and history magazines and books)
tel: (00)1 919 449 0344
fax: (00) 1 919 449 0327

VIZ COMMUNICATIONS, PO Box 77010, San Francisco, CA 94107 (English translated manga titles)

WaRP GRAPHICS, 2600 South Road, Suite 44/242, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601 (Elfquest and spin-off titles)

United Kingdom

The following are major UK comics and graphic novel publishers. If calling from outside of the UK, you should drop the first 0 and replace with: 01144 (USA); 0044 (mainland Europe and Eire); 001144 (Australasia).

AP COMICS, Suite 3, 7 French Row, St Albans, Herts AL3 5DU (adventure titles)

COM.X, The Dickens Inn, Kirk Street, London WC1N 2DG (adventure titles) 020 7831 7777

DC THOMSON, 2 Albert Square, Dundee DD1 9QJ (humour and adventure titles, pocket books and annuals)

DENNIS PUBLISHING LTD, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1T 4JD (humour and adventure titles, pocket books and annuals)
020 7907 6000

EGMONT MAGAZINES LTD, Fourth Floor, 184-192 Drummond Street, London NW1 3HP (humour, licensed and pre-school titles)
020 7380 6430

HAMLYN BOOKS, 2-4 Heron Quays, London E14 4JB (graphic novels) 020 7531 8400

JOHN BROWN CITRUS PUBLISHING, The New Boathouse, 136-142 Bramley Road, London W10 6SR (albums)
020 7565 3000

KNOCKABOUT COMICS, 10 Acklam Road, London W10 5QZ (humour titles and underground comix and graphic novels)
020 8969 2945

PANINI COMICS (UK), Panini House, Coach and Horses Passage, The Pantiles, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 5UJ (humour and adventure comics, Marvel licensed titles)
01892 500100

PULP THEATRE ENTERTAINMENT, Mermaid Court, 1 Mermaid House, London Bridge, London SE1 1HR (adventure titles) 020 7403 0378

REBELLION DEVELOPMENTS LTD, The Studio, Brewer Street, Oxford OX1 1QN (Judge Dredd The Megazine and 2000 AD)
01865 792201

THE REDAN COMPANY, Canon Court East, Abbey Lawn, Shrewsbury SY2 5DE (pre-school humour and licenced titles) 01743 364433

SAVOY BOOKS, 446 Wilmslow Road, Withington, Manchester M20 3BW (adult comics magazines, books and graphic novels)
0161 445 5771

TITAN ENTERTAINMENT GROUP LTD, Titan House, 144 Southwark Street, London SE1 0UP (licensed graphic novels, books, magazines and comics)
020 7620 0200

France

The following are the country's major comics and album publishers. If phoning from the USA, the country code of 0033 becomes 011 33

ALBIN MICHEL, 22 rue Huyghens, 75014 Paris (albums)
(0033) 1 42 79 10 00

CASTERMAN, 36 rue du Chemin Vert, 75011, Paris (albums and manga titles)

DARGAUD, 15-27 rue Moussorgski, 75018 Paris (albums and manga titles)
tel: (0033) 1 53 26 32 32
fax: (0033) 1 53 26 32 00

DELCOURT, 54 rue d'Hauteville, 75010 Paris (albums and comics)
tel: (0033) 1 56 03 92 20
fax: (0033) 1 56 03 92 30

FLUIDE GLACIAL, 33 avenue du Main, BP 187, 75755 Paris (comics and albums)
(0033) 1 43 20 23 96

GLENAT, 31-33 rue Ernest Renan, 92130 Issy-Les-Moulineaux (albums and manga titles)
tel: (0033) 1 41 46 11 41
fax: (0033) 1 41 46 11 13

J'AI LU, 84 rue de Grenelle, 75007 Paris (licenced Japanese manga titles) (0033) 1 44 39 34 70

LES HUMANOIDES ASSOCIES, 5 Passage Piver, 75011 Paris (albums)
tel: (0033) 1 49 29 88 88
fax: (0033) 1 49 29 88 89

SEMIC FRANCE, 44316 Nantes Cedex 03 (licenced comics and albums) (0033) 2 51 86 14 14

Italy

The following are the country's major comics and album publishers. If phoning from the USA, the country code of 0039 becomes 011 39

SERGIO BONELLI EDITORE, via Buonarroti 38, 20145 Milano (black and white comics)

CULT COMICS, viale Emilio Po' 380, 41100 Modena (Image and Dark Horse licensed titles)

MAGIC PRESS, Zona industriale via Ragusa 18, 00040 Pavona, Roma (Vertigo and WildStorm licensed titles)
(0039) 06 93020361

STAR COMICS, strada Selvette 1bis/1 Bosco (PG) (comics and black and white manga titles)

ASTORINA S.R.I., via Boccaccio 32, 20123 Milano (Diabolik original and reprint black and white)

KING COMICS, via Pinerolo 3, 00182 Roma (comics)

Spain

The following are the country's comics and album publishers. If phoning from the USA, the country code of 0034 becomes 011 34

NORMA EDITORAL, Fluvià 89, 08019 Barcelona (licensed DC and Dark Horse comics and albums)
0034 93 303 68 20

EDITORIAL PLANETA-DE AGOSTINI, SA, Aribau 185, 08021 Barcelona (licensed Dark Horse comics and albums)

TOUTAIN EDITOR, SA, Diagonal 325, E-08009 Barcelona (licensed Marvel, Dark Horse, Chaos!, Image and manga comics and albums) 0034 93 344 06 00

EDICIONES LA CÚPULA, Plaza de las Beatas 3, E-08003 Barcelona (adult comics and albums)
0034 32 682 8 05

Mail Order Specialists

Key to abbreviations used:

w/s	= wholesale available	CoBRA	= Comic Book Retailers' mail order protection scheme
dis	= bulk discount terms		
cat	= phone/write for catalogue	cc	= major credit cards accepted
s-cat	= sae for catalogue		
wants	= wants lists accepted	sae	= send stamped, addressed envelope with enquiry
s-wants	= sae with wants lists		

When telephoning from outside the UK, drop the first 0 and replace with: 01144 (USA); 0044 (mainland Europe & Eire); 001144 (Australasia).

Golden Age

Generally acknowledged as being published between 1938 and 1945, the first age of superhero comics, but herein designated to cover all pre-Silver Age American comics.

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (wants, CoBRA, cc) 020 8446 3464

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh St, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Goldust Comics, 67 St John's Wood High Street, London NW8 7NL (high grade, cat, wants, cc) 020 8341 5558

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2 (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 020 7836 5630

Quality Comics, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (CoBRA, cc)

Silver Acre Comics, PO Box 114, Chester CH4 8WQ (s-wants, cc) 01244 680 048 (fax: 680686)

Silver Age

Accepted as starting in 1955 with DC's superhero rebirth through ***Detective Comics*** *#225 (introducing the Martian Manhunter) and* ***Showcase*** *#4 (introducing the Barry Allen Flash). Herein covering titles up to late 1960s.*

Colmore Comics & Collectibles, Vienna House, Starley Way, Birmingham B37 7GN (cat, cc, high grade, CGC) 0121 767 1803 fax: 0121 767 1910

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (wants, CoBRA, cc) 020 8446 3464

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh St, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

East Coast Comics UK, 28 Acton Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR33 7LG (high grade, s-want, cc, sae) 01502 578385 (day) 560727 (eve)

Goldust Comics, 67 St John's Wood High Street, London NW8 7NL (high grade, cat, wants, cc) 020 8341 5558

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2 (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 020 7836 5630

Quality Comics, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (CoBRA, cc)

Quicksilver Comics, PO Box 73, Ossett WF5 0YQ (s-cat, dis, wants, cc, CoBRA) 01924 270500 (fax: 270919)

Silver Acre Comics, PO Box 114, Chester CH4 8WQ (s-wants, cc) 01244 680 048 (fax 680686)

Steve Rock Comics, 4 Orme Drive, Clevedon, Somerset BS21 7HD (Silver-Bronze, cat, wants, sae)

Post-Silver Age

Comics from 1970 to date: from Bronze Age , Marvel Age and Lead Age up to Platinum Age, Gimmick Age, Image Age and beyond. Historians will doubtless eventually decide on a name.

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2 (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 020 7836 5630

Planet Warehouse (FPI) *formerly Comics Warehouse* PO Box 600, 8 Galliford Road, Maldon, Essex CM9 7XD (w/s, cat, cc, CoBRA) 01621 877244

Quality Comics, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (CoBRA, cc)

Tarpaulin Books and Comics, 5 Oak Close, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 3EZ (wants, s-cat) 01842 820139

Hot Comics

Current or key titles, first issues or first appearances of major characters. Investment titles for speculators willing to gamble.

A Place in Space, 101 Church Street, Croydon, Surrey CR0 1RN (wants, cc, dis) 020 8686 2400

Advance Imports

US comics are not generally available in UK newsagents, except for some sea-freight shipped low-cover price DCs and Marvels, and can only be found through specialists in the rest of the world. The following companies offer air-shipped copies from all of the major US publishers.

Ace Comics, 63/64 High Street, Colchester, Essex (wants, cat, CoBRA, cc) 01206 561912

Chapter 12, 2 Prospect Place, Broadstairs, Kent CT10 1LE (wants, s-cat, CoBRA) 01843 860354

86th Floor Comics, 6 Shipley Common Lane, Ilkeston, Derbyshire DE7 8TR (dis, cat, cc) 0115 9443009

Forbidden Planet Megastore, 179 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8JR (s-cat cc) 020 7420 3666

Gosh! Strips by Mail, 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PH 020 7636 1011

Planet Warehouse (FPI) *formerly Comics Warehouse*, PO Box 600, 8 Galliford Road, Maldon, Essex CM9 7XD (w/s, cat, cc, CoBRA) 01621 877244

Red Hot Comics, The Warehouse Block D Unit 8, Glenwood Business Park, Glenwood Place, Glasgow G45 9UH (CoBRA, w/s, dis, wants, cc) tel/fax: 0141 630 0049

Limited Editions

Many high-profile miniseries and one-shots are also available in limited, numbered and often autographed editions (s&n). New titles, to acquire copyright, can also appear in small print-run "ashcan" editions (ash).

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (CoBRA, cc, ash, s&n) 020 8446 3464

Trading Cards

Several mail order dealers carry a range of non-sports cards and related peripherals (files, folders, sleeves).

Beyond Comics, 76 Harlescott Road, Nunhead, London SE15 3BZ (s-cat, s-wants, sae, CoBRA) tel/fax: 020 7564 4213

John McDonald: Non-Sport Trading Cards, 20 Alder Grove, Coatbridge, Lanarkshire ML5 3PT (cat, wants) tel/fax: 01236 433358

Old British Titles

The popularity of old British comics continues to increase as more dealers expand into this area. The following specialise in such titles.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP 020 8768 0022

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (wants, CoBRA, cc) 020 8446 3464

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

30th Century Comics, 18 Lower Richmond Road, Putney, London SW15 1JP (cat, wants, CoBRA, cc) 020 8788 2052

Weird Fantasy, 19 Decoy Road, Ormesby, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR29 3LG (s-cat, s-wants, annuals specialist)

Merchandise

Comics, film and TV-related t-shirts, posters, video games, badges, toys, action figures, etc.

Off World: The Sci-Fi Store, 142 Market Halls, Arndale Centre, Luton, Beds LU1 2TP. (specialists in Star Trek, Star Wars and sci-fi collectables) 01582 736256

Sci-Fi Merchandise Direct (FPI) and **Gear for Games (FPI)** Maldon, Essex CM9 4XD (cat) 01621 877222

Original Art

With artists having their originals returned by publishers, an increasing number of pages are now being made available for collectors.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP 020 8768 0022

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Silver Acre Comics, PO Box 114, Chester CH4 8WQ (s-wants, cc) 01244 680 048 (fax: 680686)

Peripherals

Acid-free protection for comics. Backing boards, protective bags, storage boxes, etc.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP 020 8768 0022

Just Comics, 65 Station Road, Warboys, Huntingdon, Cambs PE28 2TH (w/s only, CollectorLine™ distributor) 01487 824895 824896

Planet Warehouse (FPI) *formerly Comics Warehouse*, PO Box 600, 8 Galliford Road, Maldon, Essex CM9 7XD (w/s, cat, cc, CoBRA) 01621 877244

General Fantasy

As well as comics old and new, some suppliers also provide catalogues of multi-media fantasy, covering TV, film, trading cards and toys.

Forbidden Planet Mail Order, 144 Southwark Street, London SE1 0UP (cat) 020 7803 1900 (fax: 7803 1901)

Sci-Fi Merchandise Direct (FPI) and **Gear for Games (FPI)** Maldon, Essex CM9 4XD (cat) 01621 877222

Manga Titles

English language translations of Japanese comics and US titles drawn in the Japanese style.

United Publications, 85 Croydon Road, Keston, Kent BR2 8HU (ind, back, cat, wants, cc) 020 8325 9507

Alternative & Biographical

The following carry an extensive range of biographical and slice-of-life comicbooks and graphic novels (Fantagraphics, Maus, Crumb, Pekar...)

Gosh! Strips by Mail, 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PH (wants) 020 7636 1011

Knockabout Comics, 10 Acklam Road, London W10 5QZ (w/s, s-cat, cc) 020 8969 2945 (fax: 8968 7614)

Page 45, 9 Market Street, Nottingham NG1 6HY 0115 9508045

Comics Auctions

Accepting lots from the general public, comics auctions provide an alternative way for collectors to sell their valuable comics. The following accept items for sale, as well as providing regular catalogues for mail order bids.

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh St, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Distributors

Anybody considering opening a comics shop or becoming a mail order dealer can obtain further information about the supply of titles from the following who bulk air import US and European comics and related items on a weekly basis.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP (graphic novels, art books, comics, remainders, film and TV, popular culture) 020 8768 0022

Diamond Comic Distributors, 2nd Floor, Warton House, 150 High Street, London E15 2NP (US and European comics, cards and related items) 020 8536 5730 (fax: 8536 5736)

Red Route Distribution, Unit 24, 10 Acklam Road, London W10 5QZ (US & European comics/ graphic novels, back-list specialists) 020 8960 5855

Turnaround Publisher Services, Unit 3, Olympia Trading Estate, Coburg Road, Wood Green, London N22 6TZ (graphic novels, art books, film and TV, popular culture) 020 8829 3000

Mail Order Dealers:

CI's Mail Order Index is the industry's most cost-effective and highly-targeted way to reach a huge dedicated audience in excess of 40,000 readers every month. It costs only £4 ($6 US) per entry per issue to appear and is bookable in advance as a six-issue series. Send pre-payment of £24/$36 (plus £4.20 VAT for UK advertisers) per category with your details to:

Comics International, 345 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JJ

Cheques and international money orders should be made payable to Comics International. Alternatively, payment can be made by credit card, fax: 0(11 44) 1273 566 333 or e-mail: comicsinternational@yahoo.co.uk

The letters **(FPI)** after entries indicates that the company is part of **Forbidden Planet International Ltd**

Classified

Advertising terms and conditions

Whether for publication or not, all advertisements must be accompanied by full name, home address and daytime phone number of advertiser.

• All private classified Wants or Announcements ads (comics or card related items only) are free of charge. Maximum 50 words, they will be printed at the publisher's discretion when space permits. *(Only one advertisement can be submitted per letter/per issue so everybody gets a chance to fit in!)*

• FOR SALE ads (and dealer wants/announcements) are charged:
(i) General announcements: Stating no issue numbers, prices or titles. Per 50 words (or part thereof) ..... £5.00 ($7.50 US)
(ii) List ads: Including specific titles, issues and/or prices. Minimum charge, per 100 words (or part thereof) ..... £10.00 ($15.00 US)

Full payment, to Comics International, must accompany wordage.

CI Classified, 345 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JJ

For Sale

Comics, TV and film memorabilia and collectables for sale. Large selection of Marvel, DC and indies. Toys, original production animation cels, screen-used props, etc. We are a long-established London mart and NEC Memorabilia trader, now online at www.quitebizarre.co.uk. Not on the Internet? Call 020 8699 2196 with your wants.

Massive summer sale. Over 30,000 comics – 1980s to present, including DC, Marvel, indies, Milestone, 2099, Prestige, graphic novels, hardbacks, etc. Including over 800 mini/maxi sets priced below trade prices. Everything priced to sell and in mostly near mint condition. 14-page list available from Richard's Comics, 9 Highlands Road, Wolverhampton WV3 8AH. Tel: 01902 335027

Bargain comics for sale: **Daredevil** #183-191, 200 Miller – £20; **Conan** #2 fn+ – £22; **Batman Family** #4 – £3.50; **Four Star Spectacular** #1 – £3.50; **Spectacular Spider-Man** #1 – £18; **Web of Spider-Man** #1 – £5; **Daredevil Man Without Fear** #1-5 – £7; **Amazing Spider-Man** #200 – £12. All vf/nm unless otherwise stated. All cents, unstamped copies. £85 the lot. Call Graeme on 01484 648788 (evenings) or 07788 747100.

Underground comics for sale: Issues from the 1970s to the 1980s, all at very low prices (adults only). For free details please send an sae to Tony, 203 Hunters Square, Dagenham, Essex RM10 8BQ.

Nine-page list consisting of five long boxes of comics plus a selection of UK annuals, trade paperbacks, graphic novels and carded figures. **2000AD** progs between #400 and #1060 at 45p each or four for £1.50. DC, Marvel, Dark Horse, Image, manga and indies. Majority of comics priced at 45p or 95p – all others priced below guide. **Global Frequency**, **Fantastic Four**, **Transmetropolitan**, **Hellboy**, **Blade**, **Madman**, **Jack Staff**, **Kiss**, **Nightwing**, **Starman**, **Stray Bullets**, **Simpsons**, **Transformers**, DC Digests, Kyle Baker, Star Wars trading and gaming cards, Doctor Who trading and gaming cards. No sae required, just write or call for list. Trades welcome. Anthony Pick, 20 Grove Road, Hoylake, Wirral CH47 2DT. Tel: 0151 632 4640

Wanted

Advertisers are reminded that Wanted ads must be no longer than 50 words (including address), and only single insertion private advertisements can be published free of charge.

Wanted: Eagle Comics volume 1 #2, 3, 5 and 7. Write with details to Tony Jackson, 26 Gainsborough Road, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 2HT. Or e-mail: tja@lindseytye,freeserve.co.uk.

Wanted: **Superman** Golden Press #11195. Desperately seeking a copy of this 144-page Superman anthology that was published in 1978. Does anyone have a spare copy or know anyone who has? Also: Dell Comics **The Monkees** #1-17, **Huckleberry Hound**, **Yogi Bear**, **The Flintstones**, **DC 100 Page Super Spectacular** #5, **Love Stories** (recent reprint OK). Most others. Gold Key **HR Pufnstuf** #1-8. John Balfour, Westerstraat 67-3, Amsterdam, Holland 1015 LW.

Wanted: **Marvel Rampage** #1, #2 and #3 with freebies, **Coven** volume 7 #3 and **Teen Titans** #1 (September 2003) and #4 (December 2003). Contact Pete Webb, 36 Church Street, Denby Village, Ripley DE5 8PH. Tel: 07745 831812.

Announcements

Fanzine and small press titles must not be offered for sale before being printed. To verify publication, a sample copy must be sent in along with the advertising copy (50 words max). Single bookings only, so everybody gets a chance!

Looking for artists in a manga style! Can you draw in a manga style? Would you like to collaborate on a publishing project? Send photocopied art samples to John A. Short, 20 Grants Avenue, Bournemouth BH1 4NR.

Omnivistascope 1. A new science fiction anthology comic being transmitted in your dimension. Includes stories of adventure, action, humour and horror. Colour cover, 66 A4 pages, perfect bound. £5.99 (post free) from P. Scott, 13 Kiln Crescent, Bp Middleham, Ferryhill, Co. Durham DL17 9AP. E-mail: paulvonscott@yahoo.co.uk. www.solarwindcomic.co.uk.

Renegade #0 is out now! Action and adventure, sci-fi, horror and fantasy comics strips from the best small press creators in the UK and Ireland – Doyle, Cobley, Elliot, Lock, Naring, Askham, Miller, Scholes and Atkins. Colour cover, 48 A4 pages. Only £3.50, •5.25 or $5.95 (p&p included in all prices) from Chris Atkins, 31a Peterswood Close, Woodhouse Park, Manchester M22 9RP.

Available now: **Cruel Britannia**. Friday night in a small British town. Black and white with colour cover, 20 A5 pages, mature readers. £1.80 from Andrew Reed, 4 Piltdown Close, Hastings, East Sussex TN34 1UU.

Parataxis #6! Re-issued from Bionic Comics comes the sixth part of the Parataxis epic. A ghost from the past visits a team member and the tension builds towards a major confrontation! Send two first class stamps to Peter Hammerson, Remanic, Bolachoir, Ferns, County Wexford, Republic of Ireland. **Shades of Grey** – 22-page anthology featuring retired superheros, rampaging teenage hormones, vengeful fathers and cyborg hamsters! Available for £1.50 in p&p from J. Bonney, 21 Peck Way, Rushden, Northants NN10 6BD.

Too young to remember House of Horror? Warrior? Samhain? Dracula! Hammer films! Intestines! Demons! Samurai sword action! Only in **Paragon**! Only £1.50 from Dave Candlish, 5 Cedarway, Whitehills, Tyne and Wear NE10 8LD.

Issue 13 of **Dogbreath** the **Strontium Dog** fanzine is now out – unlucky for some! 40 pages of strips, articles and general silliness. Send £2.75 to A.Kear/ Dr Bob, Flat 11, Beaufort Court, 1 Beaufort Street (off Stapleton Road), Easton, Bristol BS5 0SQ.

Jack Kirby's The Wild, The Not So Beautiful and The Damned out now! Adult-only comicbook anthology including *The Heap* comics strip. Ideal for anyone with a dark sense of humour; those without a dark sense of humour may think I have a warped mind, but it's well worth a read! Available now for £5 from John Simpson, 1/1, 5 Harland Cottages, Scotstoun, Glasgow G14 0RS.

Well, here it is, the Mars, Red Planet issue of **From The Tomb**. Articles, commentary and features. Part colour, 72 A4 pages, with colour cover. £4.95 (plus £1 p&p) from Peter Normanton, 619 Whitworth Road, Lower Healey, Rochdale OL12 0TB. E-mail: peter.normanton@btinternet.com

Strap on your explosive bracelet and join Captain Boomerang and the gang as **Comics Retrospective** 18 opens the secret file on comicdom's unluckiest superteam, the Suicide Squad! It's 32 pages of intrigue and espionage, available now for £1.40 from Tony Ingram, 3 Lower Harlings, Shotley Gate, Ipswich, Suffolk IP9 1QE.

Pest Control 7 – "The best comic I'd read in 2004," said ***Silverbulletcomicbooks.com***. Join Airforce, 10, Penny DReadful and The Link on a new adventure into insanity, while the Brotherhood of Dread assassinates... well, that'd be telling! £1 from Grant Springford, 2 Cawston Court, Highland Road, Bromley BR1 4AF.

Wanted: two pro-quality artists to work on projects for submission to publishers. Genres involved include western, sci-fi, superheroes, pirates and horror. Please send photocopies only to Terry Hooper, 203 Ashton Drive, Ashton Vale, Bristol BS3 2PY. Overseas artists also welcome!

Comic Societies

Join The Eagle Society, dedicated to the memory of Britain's National Strip Cartoon Weekly – The Eagle 1950-1969. For just £18 per year (cheques to The Eagle Society) members receive our quarterly journal **Eagle Times**, as well as the chance to attend social gatherings and meet original Eagle contributors. Write to: Keith Howard, 25a Station Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2UA. E-mail: rsheaf@npg.org.uk

The Comics Creators Guild for industry veterans and aspiring professionals, the largest comics organisation in Europe. Monthly meetings, newsletter, exclusive publications, free legal advice, special discounts and more. For further info contact: Comics Creators Guild, 22 St James Mansions, West End Lane, West Hampstead, London NW6 2AA. www.comicscreators.org.uk

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It's been tried and tested for over 10 years and it's still going strong...

Comics International's *Classified* section has turned more than one £5 "For Sale" advertiser into a big-time full page dealer.

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Most comic fans have unwanted titles taking up valuable space...

... A loft which is in need of clearing.

... A spare room which is no longer spare.

... A garage which is pining for a car.

Classified can help you not only clear that space, but earn you money while doing so. More than 4,500 such ads have been placed on this page, with regular dealers coming back each issue.

It costs only £5 to place a 50-word For Sale general announcement. Or £10 for a 100-word list ad, detailing issues and prices. Ads can appear within a week of you sending them...

So, what are you waiting for? Everybody else to jump in first?

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Comic & Card Events

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2005
SUNDAY JULY 17

With over 160 tables, the National is the largest regular marketplace for comicbook and trading card collectors in the U.K. You will also find a whole range of related materials including TV, Film, Fantasy, Sci-fi and Toys from leading British & international dealers.
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HOW TO GET THERE. BUS: 68, 91, 168 or 188 to Woburn Place. UNDERGROUND: Piccadilly Line to Russell Square. NATIONAL RAIL: Euston and Kings Cross are within walking distance of the venue.

FUTURE DATES: 19TH JUNE, 17TH JULY, 21ST AUGUST 2005

Dealers: for table availability phone 020 7476 6873

www.comicmart.co.uk

Events

A summary of all the events advertised this issue

June

18/6 **Sheffield:** Comic Mart & Card Show, The Royal Society for the Blind, Main Hall, Mappin Street (off West Street) ..... (p75)

19/6 **London:** The National Collectors' Marketplace, The Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way ..... (p74)

25/6 **Manchester:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Sachas Hotel, Tib Street, Piccadilly, Manchester ..... (p75)

26/6 **Liverpool:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Gladstone Hotel, Lord Nelson Street, Liverpool ..... (p75)

July

2/7 **Leeds:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Leeds Metropolitan University, Brunswick Hall, Merrion Way, Leeds ..... (p75)

9/7 **Birmingham:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Aston University, Students' Guild Hall, Aston Triangle ..... (p75)

17/7 **London:** The National Collectors' Marketplace, The Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way ..... (p674)

30/7 **Newcastle:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Rutherford Hall, University of Northumbria, Ellison Place, off College Street ..... (p75)

August

6/8 **Manchester:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Sachas Hotel, Tib Street, Piccadilly, Manchester ..... (p75)

13-14/8 **Birmingham:** Memorabilia with special guests, NEC, Birmingham (p18)

20/8 **Glasgow:** Glasgow Comic & CArd Mart, Henry Wood Hall, Claremont Street, Glasgow ..... (p59)

20/8 **Sheffield:** Comic Mart & Card Show, The Royal Society for the Blind, Main Hall, Mappin Street (off West Street) ..... (p75)

21/8 **London:** The National Collectors' Marketplace, The Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way ..... (p74)

27/8 **Nottingham:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Victoria Leisure Centre, Gedling Street, Nottingham ..... (p75)

September

3/9 **Leeds:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Leeds Metropolitan University, Brunswick Hall, Merrion Way, Leeds ..... (p75)

10/9 **Newcastle:** Comic Mart & Card ShowRutherford Hall, University of Northumbria, Ellison Place, off College Street ..... (p75)

17/9 **Manchester:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Sachas Hotel, Tib Street, Piccadilly, Manchester ..... (p75)

18/9 **Liverpool:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Gladstone Hotel, Lord Nelson Street, Liverpool ..... (p675)

24/9 **Birmingham:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Aston University, Students' Guild Hall, Aston Triangle ..... (p75)

October

1/10 **Leeds:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Leeds Metropolitan University, Brunswick Hall, Merrion Way, Leeds ..... (p75)

November

19-20/11 **Brighton:** Comic Expo 2005, Hilton Metropole ..... (p39)

27/11 **Glasgow:** Glasgow Comic & CArd Mart, Henry Wood Hall, Claremont Street, Glasgow ..... (p59)

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LEEDS	**SATURDAYS:** **JULY 2nd, SEPTEMBER 3rd, OCTOBER 1st** LEEDS METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY, BRUNSWICK HALL, MERRION WAY
LIVERPOOL	**SUNDAY:** **JUNE 26th, SEPTEMBER 18th** GLADSTONE HOTEL, LORD NELSON STREET, LIVERPOOL
MANCHESTER	**SATURDAYS:** **JUNE 25th, AUGUST 6th, SEPTEMBER 17th** SACHAS HOTEL, TIB STREET, PICCADILLY, MANCHESTER
NEWCASTLE *NEW VENUE!*	**SATURDAYS:** **JULY 30th, SEPTEMBER 10th** *NEW VENUE!* RUTHERFORD HALL, UNIVERSITY OF NORTHUMBRIA, ELLISON PLACE, OFF COLLEGE STREET, NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE
NOTTINGHAM	**SATURDAY:** **AUGUST 27th** VICTORIA LEISURE CENTRE, GEDLING STREET, NOTTINGHAM
SHEFFIELD	**SATURDAY:** **JUNE 18th, AUGUST 20th** THE ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE BLIND, MAIN HALL, MAPPIN STREET (off West Street), SHEFFIELD

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